

SKRATCH

her favorite band is
Good Charlotte she reeks like patchouli

she was "drunk" with your friend that night

she wants you to
look at rings with her

she repeatedly mentions
wanting Brad Pitt's baby

she gave you two STD's
you cannot even spell

her favorite show
is Laguna Beach

she doesn't like to shave

she sings the wrong
words to your favorite
Ramones songs

she thinks good oral
is a really good speech

YOU GIVE LOVE
A BAD NAME
ISSUE #120

her tattoo reads: "Don't hate the playa"

skratchmagazine.com
2.06

EXENE CERVENKA...UNEARTH...IN FLAMES...THE APPLICATORS...SWORN ENEMY...THE SOUNDS...SCARLET...
SMALL ARMS DEALER...ARCHITECT...THE LASHES...SULLIVAN...TH' LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS...HARRISON BERGERON...
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FRI FEB 17

Burden of Guilt
SANGRE
DIVIDE THE DAY
Fall is Forgotten
SUNSET MURDERS
TO EACH HIS OWN

SUN FEB 19

A GLOBAL THREAT
THE STITCHES
46 SHORT
DEATH MARCH
TIPPERS GORE

THU FEB 23

Jasper Avenue
GOD WILL PUNISH
PALADORE'S
CONSCIENCE UNVAIL
Humility NYNTH HOUR

SAT FEB 25

AGGROLITES
The Guilty Parties
THE 6 SHARPS
THE 4 SHARPS
the **unFunslide**

FRI MAR 3

EXENE
CERVENKA
OF X
and the
ORIGINAL SINNERS

7 SHOT SCREAMERS
WMD MURGE
TRAILER The
HITCHED Wreck

THU MAR 9

FISHBONE
KNOCK-OUT
STIFF JIMY & THE VIAGRAS
EVE OF DESTRUCTION

SAT FEB 18

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE DEAD
THE NUMBER 12 LOOKS LIKE YOU
ED. GEIN ANIMOSITY
LIGHT THIS CITY
UNDERNEATH THE GUN

WED FEB 22

ROCK ON
THE ALLEYWAY
A BLOODY EPIGRAPH
SEVEN BURIED

FRI FEB 24

No Bragging Rights (CD RELEASE)
KNOCK-OUT
TAKE HIT THE CROWN SWITCH
ECHOES
HOLLOWAY OF EDEN

SUN FEB 26

SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER
MURDER YOUR GREED
MY WAKING DREAM - ITW
GONE FROM THE START
ZOMBIE CITY - IDEAL THREATS
INFECTED YOUTH - DEPRAVE
ALIVE WITHIN - SEPPERIN
MADGIRLS LOVESONG - MPG

SAT MAR 11

SKULLS
FINAL SHOW!
NEON MANIA
watching
NEW

FRI MAR 17

Dose of Adolescence
Rainmen Suite
HEMINGWAY
stay the same
Welsher

SUN MAR 19

FALLEN FRIENDS
WEST COAST BENEFIT
TERROR
HOODS
LIKE IT OR NOT DOORS @ 5PM
PLUS MANY MANY MORE

THU MAR 23

FEAR BEFORE THE MARCH OF FLAMES
CHIVE TAKES THE SQUARE
Portugal. The Man
FIRE WHEN READY

SAT MAR 25

THE KOFFIN KATS
BRUTALLY FRANK
BACK TO ZERO
THE AFTERSHOCKS

THU APR 6

DELCIDE
Vital Remains
CREMATORIUM
plus special guests

FRI APR 14

Midnight Laughs
ALL OR NOTHING ALC
The Sleezies
Prostitute Marys
WASTED SOCIETY

SUN MAR 12

SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN QUALIFIER
TICKET 2 NOWHERE
FRIENDLY FIRE
FATE DENIED
THE GRENADES
BURNING AS EMBERS
FLAK - UNIFORM SOCIETY
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

SAT MAR 18

Three Bad Jacks
CHOPTOPS
CALABRESSE
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

WED MAR 22

BLACK HEART
TOO PURE TO DIE
Burn In Silence
CASSIUS
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

FRI MAR 24

Six Feet Under
Sworn Enemy
ANIMOSITY
before today
CONTORTION Arkaiik

FRI MAR 31

SUB HUMAN
WORLD/INFERNO
friendship society
BORN/IDEAD

FRI APR 7

STILL REMAINS
NODES OF RANVER
IFHOPEDIES
DEMIRICIOUS

SAT APR 22

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march 13 & 14 ► the fonda



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ANTI-FLAG THE CASUALTIES THE UNSEEN SMOKE OR FIRE THE A.K.A.S

friday march 24 ► the fonda



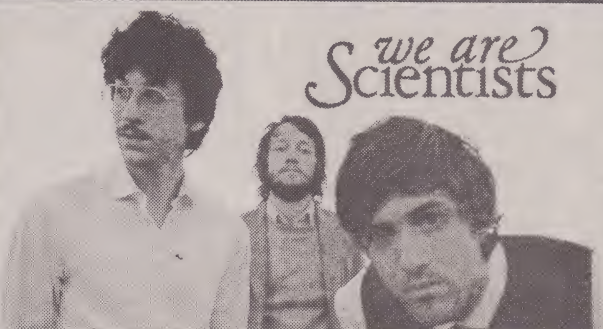
NEBULA

march 25 ► el rey theatre

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THE CLASSIC CRIME
AND
JONEZEITA

march 25 ► the fonda



FOREIGN BORN • THE GRATES

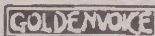
april 1 ► el rey theatre

2ND ANNUAL SKA & ROCKSTEADY BONANZA

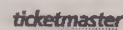
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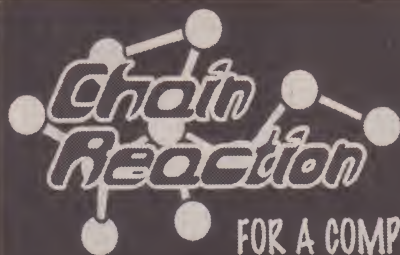
saturday april 8 ► el rey theatre ► 6pm

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TUE-FEB 21 **INDIE ROCK \$10**
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 Lyndsie Diaries
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THU-FEB 23 **INDIE ROCK \$13**

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<p>Wed. 2/8 * \$10</p> <p>SOLDIERS DIE SAINTS SING OF THE END AURORA BLACK DAWN OF LAMENT AT YOUR FUNERAL</p>	<p>Thur. 2/9 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>The Lab Rats Toopers Gore Neon Maniacs Bad Antics Atomic Youth Raping Gods</p>
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<p>Sun. 2/12 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p><i>The Smash Up</i> Adair * The Deviant Minds</p>	<p>Tue. 2/14 * \$8</p> <p>THE HUMAN ABSTRACT TO END ALL WARS * DERRAIL ROB CARSON * AS THE DEER STRENGTH BEHIND TEARS</p>
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<p>Wed. 2/15 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>Buried Beside You Cold War Syndrome</p>	<p>Thur. 2/16 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>Dilemmas Singled Out</p>
--	---

<p>Fri. 2/17 * \$10</p> <p>Saturday Night Riot Our Kids Transmission Stay The Same Mad Temple</p>	<p>Sun. 2/19 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>RED GUN RADAR Cota * Everyday Tragedy</p>
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<p>Tue. 2/21 * \$8</p> <p>The Up Shots Introspect The Haters</p>	<p>Wed. 2/22 * \$10</p> <p>Forever Wings Fold Roulette Red Wire Morning Meridian * I Adore Autumn's Falling</p>
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<p>Thur. 2/23 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>wheatus Army Of Freshman * MMVF The Henry Clay People The Outside View</p>	<p>Fri. 2/24 * \$10</p> <p>GOOD CLEAN FUN THIS TIME TOMORROW SOMEDAY SOON * BRING IT BACK BRAINDEAD</p>
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<p>Sun. 2/26 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>SING OF THE END ABSTRACT PERFECTION AND EVER IT INVOLVES MURDER EVER THROUGH ASHES AMBERGINE</p>	<p>Tue. 2/28 * \$8</p> <p>Southcott No One Goes Home The Lockett</p>
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<p>Wed. 3/8 * \$10</p> <p>The Red Coterie Adoration A Vision Within The Inner Room</p>	<p>Wed. 3/15 * \$10</p> <p>Cold War Hammerfist Sunset Murders To Each His Own</p>
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<p>Wed. 3/22 * \$10</p> <p>Belay My Last Cydne Raven Vengeance Upon Us Years To Come xFINISH ITx Even In Tragedy</p>	<p>Wed. 3/29 * \$8 / \$10</p> <p>Tokyo Rose Socratic House Of Fools</p>
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The Pristines - Gitch - Butt Trumpet
Dirty Red - Sick Three Days

Sunday Feb 19
Far From Finished - Born to Lose
Longway - Slab

Monday Feb 20
Condemned To Suffer - Summit Core - Obliterated
Enthraller - Putrid Faith

Tuesday Feb 21
Louis & The Joey G. Band
Hosting an Open Mic Blues Jam

Wednesday Feb 22
Placid - Half Broken - Arc Welders
Amy and Mike

Thursday Feb 23
Misinterpret - Flowers For The Dead
Six By Silver - Jatonka

Friday Feb 24
Johnny Cash Birthday Show with:
Hellbound Hayride - The Screamin Yee-Haws
The Astounding Roy Gorbisons - Ditch Diggers
Deadend Stiffs

Saturday Feb 25
Black Power Records Night With
Temper Tantrum - Fadeaways - Fuck Bunny
The Nonesuch

Sunday Feb 26
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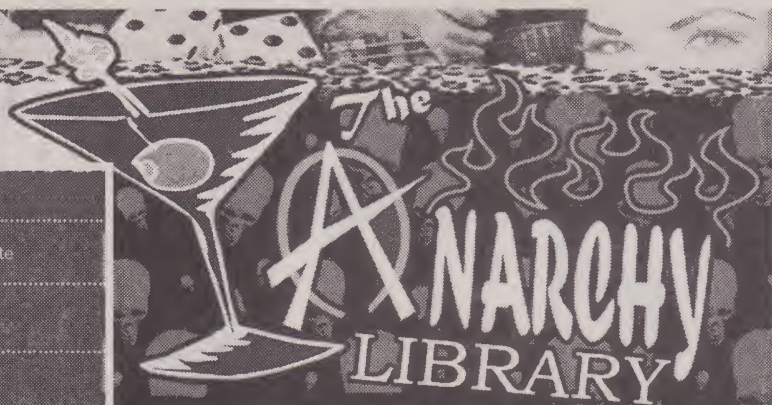
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Feb 26th - HALFWAY HOUSE - Philadelphia, PA
Feb 27th - WELFARE RECORDS - Boston, MA
Feb 28th - CBGBs - NY, NY
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Mar. 3rd - ALPINE THEATRE - Ventura, CA
Mar. 4th - BRITISH INVAION 2K6 - San Bernardino
Mar. 5th - ALLEN THEATRE - Southgate, CA

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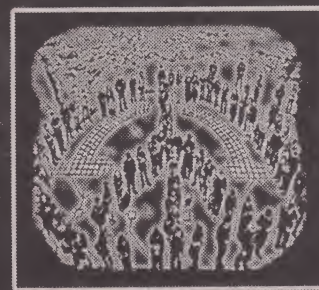
Bang Sugar Bang
"Thwak Thwak Go Crazy"



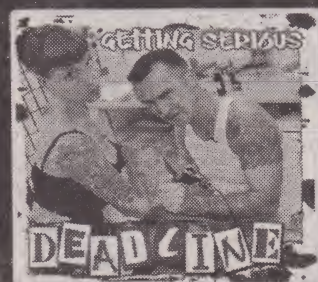
The Vibrators
"Buzzin'"



Final Conflict
"Ashes to Ashes"



So Unloved
"Pink Black & Broken"



Deadline
"Getting Serious"



Red Alert
"Blazin' thru the Years"



GBH
"Punk Junkies"



Blitz "Hits"

pinky Star

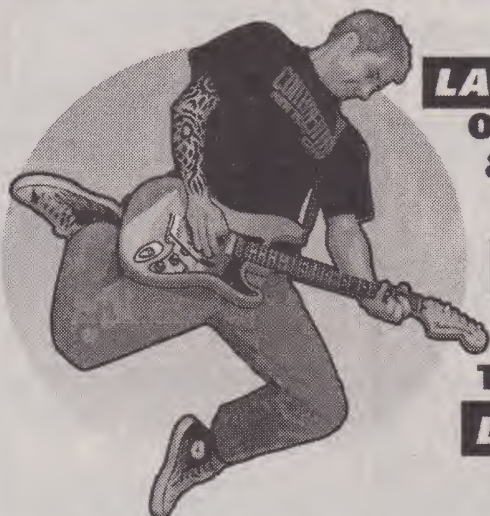
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2.75" X 2.75"	\$15	\$23	\$46	\$92
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2.75" X 2.75" 1C	\$115	\$118	\$138
2.75" X 2.75" 2C	\$171	\$175	\$205
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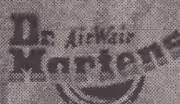




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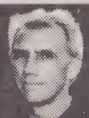
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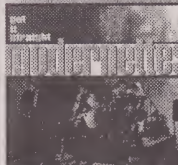
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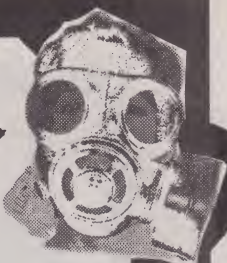
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SKRATCH MAGAZINE



PUBLISHER/EDITOR IN CHIEF
Scott Present <Scott@skratchmagazine.com>

CONDUCTOR OF CHAOS
Sue Lopez <sue@skratchmagazine.com>

PRESS GIRL GONE MAD
Lauren Senecal <Press@skratchmagazine.com>

COMPACT DISC COLLECTOR
Amanda Riggie <Amanda@skratchmagazine.com>

COMPUTAH GEEKS
Chris Forrette, Amanda Riggie, Scott Present.

SEMI-LITERATE COPY EDITOR
Gregory Moore

WEBPIXEL-PUSHER/SQUARE EYES
Andrew Burris <Webpunk@skratchmagazine.com>



ADVERTISING ASS-ISTANCE
714 639-5000 x105 <Ads@skratchmagazine.com>

WANNABEE JOURNALISTS

Joe De Andrade, Rich Bailing, Denise Biaz, Jeremy Bolm, Beth Van Boxtel, Neal Breton, Cassie Lynn Burke, Simon Cardoza, Carley Charpentier, Francis Corva, Lorelei Cota, Anthony De La Cruz, Almee Curran, Matthew Edmund, Aland Falde, Kevin Farr, Dug Fredricksen, Norberto Gomez, Jr., Chris Henedrickson, Larry Hernandez, Matthew Hocking, Jason Jackowiak, Zac Hibbard, Adam Hudson, Janelle Jones, Jeff Lambert, Davie Kaufmann, Dave Kargol, Jasten King, Sarah Laidlaw, Mabel Lam, Michelle Li, Joe Licavoli, Jeff Lorber, Manda Dex Punk, Todd Markel, Chris Miller, Chip Midnight, Casey Murphy, Gregory Moore, Jennifer Moncayo, Chad Nieboer, Annette Ovanessian, Erika Owens, Ryan Panglihan, Jack Partain, Jeff Penalty, Travis Poole, Scott Present, Daniel Rivera, Ana Rodriguez, Charlene Rogers, Jude Ruiz, Brandon Russell, Jason Schreurs, Matthew Siblo, Don Sili, Luke Simpson, Marcus Solomon, Mike Sos, Brian Spiegall, Dwight Sposato, Courtney Strain, Jennifer Swan, Marcia Taylor, Tekolote, Thomas Murray, Tom Tearaway, Joe Wallace, Matt Wallace, Mark A. Whitaker, Ian Wilkins, Melissa Wong, X Ray, John Woods, Richie Wu, Brittany Zane, H. Barry Zimmerman.

CONTRIBUTING FLASHERS

Daniel Boyd-Barrett, David Beach, Dan Boczarski, Kim Cao, Matthew Edmund, Kevin Farr, Jimbo Gray, Elizabeth Hare, Shannon Haslinger, Heather Jagger, David Jiro, Janelle Jones, Heather Kime, Jasten King, Eric Lawson, Todd Markel, Annette Ovanessian, Mindy Poder, Esteban Ramirez, Chad Sengstock, Bryan Sheffield, Katie Shinn, David Small, Marcus Solomon, Noel Vasquez, Mark A. Whitaker, Jonathan Willoughby, John Woods, Scott Wulfestieg.

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ADVERTISING A-HOLES

Scott Present (<ads@skratchmagazine.com>), Mark Yaeger (<mark@skratchmagazine.com>).

PILEDRIERS (PARK, DROP, AND RUN)

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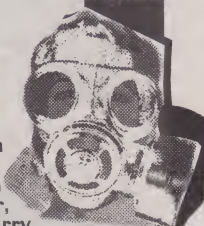
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Uh, that jerk in that desk did it- you know over there.

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The editor does not necessarily share the opinions expressed in this publication and assumes no responsibility for the advertisers within its pages. The editor does what he does and when he does it--he does it with pride. And with a swagger --oh that swagger. I mean, "Hey Ladies, get funkayyy." If you haven't noticed: this issue is one after the last one.

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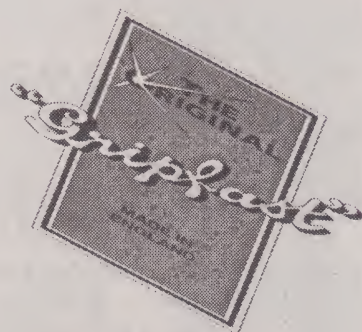
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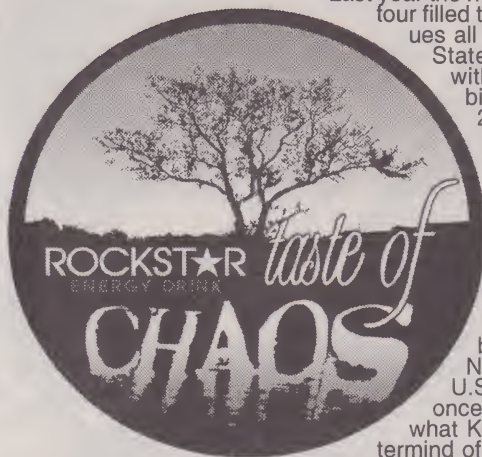
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Last year the new Taste of Chaos tour filled to the brim 37 venues all across the United States and Canada with some of the biggest bands of 2005. The tour then went international and hit up England, Scotland, Germany, Australia, and Japan. This winter the tour returns for a second run and is bigger and better. Now, 46 cities in the U.S. and Canada will once again experience what Kevin Lyman, mastermind of the Vans Warped Tour, has created. Says Lyman,

"Our goal is to give fans a six-hour arena show with a multimedia experience of live music and activities for under \$30 bucks." The bands playing the U.S. leg of the tour are Thrice, The Deftones, Atreyu, Story of the Year, As I Lay Dying, Dredg, Silverstein, Funeral for a Friend, The Receiving End of Sirens, Pelican, The Confession, Adair, Street Drum Corps, Greeley Estates, Millionaire, and The Smashup. For show dates and band lineups, visit www.tasteofchaos.com.

SKRATCH knows what the truly important questions are, such as, "What band on the Taste of Chaos Tour could you beat in a mud-wrestling match?" and "What is the worst object you have seen tossed up on stage?" Read on to find out what happens when SKRATCH and the Taste of Chaos tour collide.

KEVIN LYMAN

CREATOR/DIRECTOR OF TASTE OF CHAOS

Mascot: Any animal that can't sit still for more than 10 minutes.

Worst object tossed on stage: When I was working on stage I got hit by a piece of cheese pizza once.

Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Probably The Deftones. They are the closest to my age.

JOHN REESE

CO-FOUNDER/ARTIST MANAGER FOR TASTE OF CHAOS

Define a good day: Good music, good beer, and the sound of children's voices.

Worst object tossed on stage: Molotov cocktail at Guns N' Roses in Bogota, Columbia.

Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: ALL OF THEM!

THE SMASHUP

WATT WHITE-THROAT

COMBINED WEIGHT: Two tons o' fun.

HOMETOWN: New York frigging City.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: ANT-Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin; RICH-Bad Brains, Fugazi; VIN-Rancid, Misfits; WATT-Kiss, Maroon 5

YOUR SOUND: How about one word? CRUMBELIEVABLE.

What does playing Taste of Chaos mean to you: Nothing! More importantly, what does it mean to Taste of Chaos to have US in IT? But seriously, it's our biggest moment yet, and we plan to be both punctual and pummeling.

Define a good day: 7 a.m.: breakfast/reflection. 9 a.m.: calisthenics. 12 p.m.: self-love, nap. 4 p.m.: rock show! 7 p.m.: self-love, Annie's shells &

cheese.

7 p.m.: ACCESS HOLLYWOOD. 8:30 p.m.: beddie-bye.

Biggest Fears: Besides Bigfoot? Cancer, AIDS, terrorism...Did we mention Bigfoot?

Worst object tossed on stage: Nothing of this nature has yet to be thrown at us on stage. We welcome projectiles of all kinds. (May we suggest cash? Teddy Grahams?)

Biggest myth about touring: That after the music dies down and the fans go home with a memory that will last a lifetime, the, uh, music comes back up again and no one sees the hidden Easter-egg encore where we make up songs using names of people who were in the audience and distribute wax lips. This, no one sees.

PELICAN

LAURENT LEBEC

COMBINED WEIGHT: 560 or so.

HOMETOWN: Chicago.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Bedhead, Earth, Failure.

YOUR SOUND: Triumphant, open, courageous, imposing, rocking.

Define "music": Music is life. Blessed are those who connect with music as a life source and can immerse themselves in it shamelessly. All others are jealous. That's why they try so hard to force you into something else. Biggest fears: World War III-no joke. Have you heard of the Doomsday Clock? I just really feel like our liberties are being stripped so fast and that competition for world resources and hegemony is spelling out impending global warfare. I'm just very worried about the state of the state, so to speak.

Guilty pleasures: Comedy tapes, beers on tap, record stores, pot, dirty jokes, and seven-year-old behavior.

Most obscure object to autograph: A thigh. That's it. Otherwise, we autograph the shit people buy, generally. But a body part is always cool to sign! It reconnects me to my middle-school years, when I fantasized about being in L.A. Guns.

Top-secret info: All of us were vegan straight-edge at some point in our lives.

THE RECEIVING END OF SIRENS

BRENDAN BROWN-VOCALS, BASS

COMBINED WEIGHT: Approximately 870 big ones.

HOMETOWN: Boston, MA.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Our everyday life, Radiohead, Bjork, Cave In.

YOUR SOUND: "O' whoa, the sweetest thing."

Define a good day: In the last few months I have experienced a good amount of people close to me passing on and also a good amount of people close to me having lost friends or family. With that said, I think we often forget the frailty and preciousness of our own lives, so when someone close to us passes away, it puts a lot of what we take for granted into

John Reese



The SmashUp



Kevin Lyman



Photo by Lisa Johnson

perspective. Aware of how cliché it may sound, a good day for me is waking up and realizing that I still have the greatest gift: life.

Top-secret info: We are currently living together on a 50-acre llama farm working on our next record. (This is actually true.)

Mascot: Obviously, a llama.

Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Most certainly Atreyu! You thought what happened to their horse in THE NEVER ENDING STORY was bad?

Most obscure object to autograph: Just a couple of weeks ago, a few of us were at our local movie theatre. As we were entering the cinema, we were approached by a fan who inquired if he could meet us after the movie to sign his friend's blanket. Sure enough, as soon as we walked out, he was there, Sharpie and blanket in tow!

STREET DRUM CORPS

FRANK ZUMMO

COMBINED WEIGHT: 100 pounds...flacoooo.

HOMETOWN: NY and NJ.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Will Farrell, Chris Farley, Don Johnson.

What does playing Taste of Chaos mean to you?: The opportunity to take street-drumming to the masses.

Mascot: A Jackalope.

Guilty Pleasures: Dancing on the ceiling with Lionel Richie.

Pre-show Rituals: War paint, stretch, rehearsal, and a beer

Top-secret info: Frank paints his toenails pink; Adam has his neck pierced; Bobby slept with Michael Jackson at age 8.

ADAIR

ROB TWEEDIE-VOCALS

COMBINED WEIGHT: 785 lbs.

HOMETOWN: St. Louis, MO.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Each other.

YOUR SOUND: A hot crustacean band.

Define a good day: Playing a show to open-minded people who are there for music and truly moving them.

Worst object tossed on stage: An entire Butterball turkey...but security escorted her off of the stage.

Most obscure object to autograph: A girl's face in Orlando. We made big eyebrows and facial hair for her out of our signatures.

Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Story of the Year (but not their crew).

Top-secret info: Patrick used to be a rapper when we first met him. He was awesome at it, too. Then Jeff introduced him to Earth Crisis.

GREELEY ESTATES

DALLAS SMITH-GUITAR

COMBINED WEIGHT: Less than Mama Cass, who choked on a ham sandwich.

HOMETOWN: Phoenix, AZ.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Refused, AC/DC, Green Day, Bob Marley, Sharon, Lois, and Brahm.

YOUR SOUND: Extremely melodic post-hardcore.

Define "music": Music is taking a bunch of random wave patterns and frequencies and organizing them into something that moves you and captures your attention.

Biggest fears: Taking out the garbage, menstruation, and minotaurs.

Guilty pleasures: Mario Golf, CSI, R. Kelly's "Trapped in the Closet", '80s hair metal.

Most obscure object to autograph: We autographed someone's tongue in Amarillo, TX, sometime in March last year. It's on our DVD. That kid was cool!

Top-secret info: We wanted to name our band Dienda. Ugh.

THE CONFESSION

JEFF VETA-DRUMS

COMBINED WEIGHT: 670 lbs.

HOMETOWN: Dana Point, CA.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Too many to name. Genres: European metal, hard rock...It's a wide spectrum.

YOUR SOUND: Powerful, melodic, big, heavy (sometimes), entertaining.

What does playing Taste of Chaos mean to you?: Being on a tour that brings so many musical backgrounds and influences together and exposes kids to new sounds and great new bands is amazing. We are gonna have kids hearing us who might not have before, and that's a great opportunity for all the bands on the tour. Annnnnnd, we get to play for tons of kids every night, so that's gonna be bad-ass, too!

Define "music": An expression and interpretation of feeling through sound. Music needs to be able to move you and make you feel lost in that moment that you connect to a song.

Mascot: A racolphin (hybrid raccoon and dolphin). Rabid and brutal, but smooth.

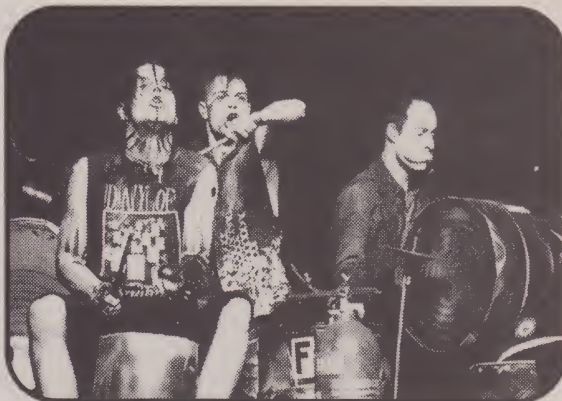
Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Greeley Estates; but Dallas would have to be the ref, because he could probably take us all with one sweeping blow.

Top-secret info: I (Jeff) am a compulsive spender (shoes and jackets, mostly), Jake is a pothead, Kevin loves World War II, Matt doesn't smoke and has a picture of a dragon he painted on his wall at home, and Taylor has the Chinese symbol for love on his ankle.

Pelican



Street Drum Corps



The Receiving End Of Sirens



Adair



SILVERSTEIN
SHANE TOLD-VOCALS
COMBINED WEIGHT: 850 lbs.
HOMETOWN: Burlington, ON.
BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Grade, The Get Up Kids, Lifetime.
YOUR SOUND: Aggressive but catchy and melodic.
Mascot: A chihuahua. We love Mexican food.
Biggest fears: Not to sound typical, but there's always fear of death, and dying, and accidents. (RIP Beatz.)
Most obscure object to autograph: I autographed some girl's face before. And I autographed someone's car. Once I autographed a Bible (not really sure I should have).
Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Well, three of us used to mud-wrestle professionally, so we'd probably be able to beat everyone except The Deftones. Those dudes are tough as nails.
Top-secret info: We're all vegetarians, and I'm vegan; and I used to go to school for molecular biology. Billy is a huge lacrosse fan/player, and Josh used to be a snowboard instructor.

DREDG
GAVIN HAYES-SINGER
COMBINED WEIGHT: 88 grams.
HOMETOWN: The Bay Area, California.
BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Lack of sleep, long drives, and opposition.
YOUR SOUND: Cute deer, big truck.
Define "music": It is the logical religion.
Define a good day: A double breve cappuccino.
Mascot: The penguin.
Top-secret info: The first song we ever recorded (about 12 years ago) was called "psychoparanoia".

FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND
MATT DAVIES
COMBINED WEIGHT: Chunky.
HOMETOWN: No town is our hometown.
BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Ballroom dancing.
YOUR SOUND: Total rock progression.
What does playing Taste of Chaos mean to you?: It means we get to taste some chaos-this time in the U.S. of A.
Define a good day: One that doesn't involve me slipping on my ass every five minutes.
Mascot: The platypus (for it's rather cunning underwater lifestyle).
Top-secret info: We wrote all the great Backstreet Boys song. (Not many people know that!)
Worst object tossed on stage: Ummmm, maybe urine. At least, it could have been urine. It was at an Iron Maiden show in mainland Europe, and Kris got the full brunt of the liquid. It could have been beer, but we like to think that it was someone's nasty bodily fluids!

Greeley Estates



The Confession



Most obscure object to autograph: Some kids left butt cheek on one of our tours a few years ago. It was hairy and was quite intimidating, but I went through with it and became more of a man because of it.

AS I LAY DYING
COMBINED WEIGHT: 872 man lbs.
HOMETOWN: San Diego, CA.
BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Our moms and dads, Jurassic animals (ptero-dactyls, stegosauruses, etc.), Metallica, Andrew Lloyd Weber, Mexican food, Thin Lizzy, monster trucks, Randy Rhodes, Iron Maiden, Jesus, and C.S. Lewis.
YOUR MUSIC: Aggressive melodic metal.
What does playing Taste of Chaos mean to you?: Playing with The Deftones, Thrice, Atreyu, Story of the Year, Dredg, Pelican, Funeral for a Friend, and a slew of other bands across North America for a total of eight weeks.
Worst object tossed on stage: I can't think of anything gross, dangerous, or scary that has been thrown on stage; but I can say I have seen some disgusting things from stage-most notably, gross old sunburnt boobs at Ozzfest. Definitely a bum-out.
Guilty pleasures: I really love musicals (examples being JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR and WEST SIDE STORY).
Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: All of them, for we are most metal.
Biggest myth about touring: The most common misconception about touring is that it is a 24-hour piece-of-cake party and fun-fest. In reality, every band on this tour has worked very hard touring in miserable circumstances to get to the point they are currently at. Oftentimes it becomes too much and dudes quit or bands break up. We are fortunate enough to have fans who love our music as much as we do, thus making all of this worthwhile.

ATREYU
DAN JACOBS-GUITAR
COMBINED WEIGHT: 865 lbs.
HOMETOWN: Orange County, CA.
BIGGEST INFLUENCES: '80s metal of all types.
YOUR SOUND: Like, totally fucking sweet, man.
Mascot: A giraffe, 'cause we sound similar.
Pre-show rituals: Stretch, play guitar for a while to get my hands warmed up, and sometimes watch the band before us to get pumped up on what we get to do soon after them.
Most obscure object to autograph: The Warped Tour is a prime place to find weird objects getting signed by bands. People bring up everything from trash on the ground to condoms to fake legs. Sometimes guys let us sign their boobs, which is pretty sweet, I guess. It makes the other bands jealous, of course.
Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: Hmmm, that's a tough

Silverstein



Dredg



one. Any female bands on this tour?

Biggest myth about touring: That it's all crazy parties and sluts everywhere. It's more like rock 'n' roll summer camp. Sometimes it gets pretty crazy, but more often it's just dudes hanging out and trying to kill time till you have to play and then killing time till you have to leave for the next city.

STORY OF THE YEAR

COMBINED WEIGHT: 27 lbs.

HOMETOWN: St. Louis represent.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: H2O.

YOUR SOUND: Pagan nuns with unchecked aggression.

Mascot: A black bear, because I'm lazy as fuck and I like to eat, and when it comes time to kick ass, I'm fucking down.

Worst object tossed on stage: Large, sweaty bras are thrown onto the stage sometimes, but I usually just put them on. I've seen batteries fly by on the Warped Tour, and that makes me wonder: who keeps batteries in their pocket just in case they feel like throwing them?

Guilty pleasures: I don't really feel guilty about anything. I like fast food, skateboarding, watching TV, and that's about it. Other than that, I play a lot of music, and that makes me happy. I have Meatloaf and Elton John on my iPod.

Band you could beat in a mud-wrestling match: I think we could probably take Thrice, 'cause they're very peaceful creatures. But you never know: they could snap at any moment. We could for sure kick Funeral for a Friend's ass. As a matter of fact, I challenge Matt to a match right now! Pansy.

Top-secret info: Despite popular belief, we are all straight.

THRICE

COMBINED WEIGHT: 705 lbs.

HOMETOWN: Orange County, CA.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Life, mood swings, life experiences, weather, giant sea beasts.

YOUR SOUND: Heavy, atmospheric, melodic, dynamic, neat-o.

Define a good day: Making and/or playing music, hanging with friends and family with a good game on the tube.

Mascot: A grizzly bear. We sleep a lot-sometimes for months at a time-and we've been known to maul unsuspecting campers while looking for food.

Biggest fears: Death of a loved one. Giant squid attack. Kevin Federline going double-platinum.

Worst object tossed on stage: A shit-stained pair of granny panties at a show we played with New Found Glory in 2000. Who knows how or why they were thrown on stage. We're not even sure if they were meant for us or not. They weren't found until after the show.

Top-secret info: Nothing, really. Our DVD uncovered all of our innermost secrets (at least, everything we were willing to share).

"I think we could probably take Thrice, 'cause they're very peaceful creatures. But you never know: they could snap at any moment. We could for sure kick Funeral for a Friend's ass. As a matter of fact, I challenge Matt to a match right now! Pansy."

Story Of The year



Funeral For A Friend



Atreyu



As I Lay Dying



Thrice



YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME



A PERFECT MURDER CARL BOUCHARD (LEAD GUITAR)

Love is: something hard to deal with. It is at the same time the best thing you can get and the worst. Love is the Perfect Murder.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: They should have \$1,000 in each card. But it will never happen. Ideal celebrity match-up: I don't know. Who cares anyway? Jessica Alba and me. Thank you.

MAKAELA'S FIEND CHRIS (GUITAR)

Love is: kind of alright.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Famous father figures
Ideal celebrity match-up: Burt Reynolds and Tom Selleck

THE SLEEPING CAMERON (GUITAR)

Love is: Amor in Spanish.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I love you honey, now make me pancakes.
Ideal celebrity match-up: Webster and Xena: Warrior Princess

SKRATCH THE POMP (WRITER)

Love is: being fucked by 50 brutal convicts until you pass out from the pain.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I've always wanted to tie you up, blindfold you, throw you in my trunk, take you to an undisclosed location, and have my way with you. Would you like to get a drink after work?

Ideal celebrity match-up: Dita Von Teese and Tiffany Fallon getting off with each other, then letting me join in and take control. Lots of rope, whips, leashes, and other toys would also be needed.

ROYDEN KERRY AND TREEBO

Love is: a beautiful parrot that dwells in the jungle until the jungle [gets] mowed down by the white man. V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Dear my weightlifting uncle, I have had a crush on you for eons and I can only tell you through the power of Hallmark greeting cards.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Courtney Love and Andy Dick... if they had a child it would be known as "love dick"

SKRATCH RORY MCALLISTER (PHOTOGRAPHER)

Love is: not having to close the door when you're taking a poop.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: You know that I love you, so don't take this hard, but all that I got you was this \$2 card.

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Kirstie Alley, before the Jenny Craig.

DEADLINE LA JASTEN KING (DESIGNER/PARTY PROMOTER AND DJ)

Love is: very expensive.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Thanks for putting up and putting out with me.
Ideal celebrity match-up: Me

ADAIR ROB TWEEDIE (VOCALS)

Love is: wanting to start every day by waking up next to the person.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Even though we're breaking up, I still gave you a Valentine's Day to remember me by... enjoy the herpes!
Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Mischa Barton

HEART CLUB, TIGER BEAT/BOP AIMEE CURRAN (CO-PRES, ASSISTANT EDITOR)

Love is: being makey-outey with someone that makes your heart feel fuzzy

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Homemade

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Roxy from Roxy and the Beat

SAENZ OF THE TIMES P.R. RHONDA SAENZ (PUBLICIST)

Love is: my deepest passion.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Real hugs & kisses!!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Chef Michael Wray of Hells Kitchen & Lola

SKRATCH AUDIOPHILE (WRITER)

Love is: something most people aspire to but never truly obtain.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I'm only going out with you because my first, second, and third choice for a Valentine's date turned me down. I hope I still score.

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Ewan McGregor, Edward Norton, and any lead singer of any punk band, because they are sexy.

COME AND GO SHANNON HUDSON (LEAD VOCALS)

Love is: all you need. John Lennon said that. He was the walrus. I could be the walrus.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Happy Valentine's Day. Love, Jack Daniels. Drink Up.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Thom Yorke and Anna Nicole Smith

MY AMERICAN HEART STEVEN OIRA (DRUMS)

Love is: "Love is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you're gonna get." - Forrest Gump

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Your love is like constipation...it takes my breath away.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Steven Oira and Natalie Portman together FOREVER!

WWW.UNDERGROUNDUP.COM ANNETTE OVANESSIAN (PHOTOGRAPHER/WRITER)

Love is: out there, somewhere...

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Front: Do you like me? Inside: Circle YES or NO or MAYBE

Ideal celebrity match-up: Yummy couple, Emeril and Julia Child

NO USE FOR A NAME TONY SLY (GUITAR)

Love is: a miss-used word.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: A check for \$500

Ideal celebrity match-up: Courtney Love and Pete Doherty

EVER WE FALL MATTHEW SZKLARZ (DRUMS)

Love is: a voluntary sterilization of oneself.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Image: shadowy figure peering into a window. Caption: You're my Valentine either way.

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Emily Browning

SKRATCH JANELLE JONES (WORDSMITH)

Love is: That bad-ass song by Subhumans!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: A T.S.O.L. "Love Story"-themed missive.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Anna Nicole Smith and...Pat Robertson (She likes 'em old, as we all know - PLUS maybe then he'd die).

HOUSE OF BLUES MISHFIT (RAGER)

Love is: EVOL VIVA HATE!!!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Don't get a VD on VDI

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Frankenstein or Carey Hart.

STAVESACRE DIRK LEMMENES (BASS)

Love is: an action.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Let me take this commercialized opportunity to be especially nice to you for one day, even though I should make the attempt always. Happy Valentine's Day.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Morrissey and Peaches

CANNAE STEVE COLOMBO (GUITAR)

Love is: a fresh bottle of bourbon and pack of smokes, a girl who's just old enough not to know better and a good excuse to leave.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: On the cover, have your traditional V-Day layout, with the roses and airbrushed outlines and heart-shaped chocolate-spread all laid out, and the text would say, "To A Wonderful Night..." The inside would say, "Sorry I gave you an STD, better luck next time..." Love, <insert name here>

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] it would have to be Mary, you know, the Mother of God...because I like a challenge.

SKRATCH SUE LOPEZ (CONDUCTOR OF CHAOS)

Love is: when I freak out over a bug and my guy comes rushing over to kill it for me.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I love you, but I'm not IN love with you.

Ideal Celebrity Match up: Martha Stewart and Marilyn Manson, they even each other out - super dull and super freak

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP CASEY MURPHY (COLLEGE MARKETING COORDINATOR)

Love is: a pair of garden shears around your neck

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Happy Valentine's Day! Can I cum on your face now???

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] James Franco and Todd the bartender from Little Cave Bar, Highland Park, CA

DMONSTRATIONS NICK BARNETT (BASS/VOCALS)

Love is: just another four letter word.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Roses are red; Violets are blue; My junk is broken; So we can't hang out tonight.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Tom Waits and Janis Joplin

MAELSTROM MUSIC PR CURTIS SMITH (OWNER/PUBLICIST)

Love is: not having a problem changing a dirty diaper.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I don't have any money.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Fred Savage and Courtney Love

WWW.RBPHOTOGRAPHY.NET BRANDAN MARTINEZ (PHOTOGRAPHER)

Love is: people who keep it real!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: EAT ROT AND DIE... Happy Valentine's Day!

Ideal celebrity match-up: W.T.F.

SILVERSTEIN SHANE TOLD (VOCALS)

Love is: for sluts and losers.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Happy Valentine's Day. I don't really love you as much as I used to, but if I don't buy you a card I'm in the doghouse for the next 3 weeks.

Ideal celebrity match-up: If Elisha Cuthbert is reading this... You and Me.

LAMB OF GOD D. RANDALL BLYTHE (MINISTER OF VOCAL DECIMATION)

Love is: a queasy feeling.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: If I throw a stick, will you go away? Happy Valentine's Day Dog Face!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Me, Jennifer Lopez, and Satan.

CATCH 22 INC. PATRICK KAYS (BOSS)

Love is: taking a shit while your partner is brushing their teeth in the same bathroom.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Sorry, this is as special as Valentine's Day is going to get for you!

Ideal celebrity match-up: George Wendt & Nicole Richie

GFFL/HC KEIGHT BEAVEN (AWKWARD/CO-PRES)

Love is: what changes people for the better and/or worse depending on the circumstances.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Outside: Sweetheart's Day is the NEW Valentine's Day...

Inside: so you have to wait until October for your gift. Loves!

Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Frosty the Snowman, but usually anyone in the entertainment industry is crazy and I don't want to be paired with him.

STREET DRUM CORPS

BOBBY ALT, FRANK ZUMMO (DRUMS)

Love is: a good smack on the ass!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Make your own card!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Bert McCracken and Gerard Way

SKRATCH

THOMAS MURRAY (WRITER)

Love is: a series of grunts and awkward glances.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Sorry I keep asking about three-ways and the butt, however it is Valentine's Day after all.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Kerry King and Jessica Alba

XO PUBLICITY

SONIA FRANZAGO (PUBLICIST)

Love is: the only thing that makes the people that have it entirely happy and the people that don't, entirely jealous of that happiness.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: (I suck at this game and can't think of anything to say.)

Ideal celebrity match-up: I always thought Brad and Jen were perfect. I guess that just goes to show how much I know about celeb match-ups!

BURNE IN SILENCE

MIKE CASAVANT (PINNED AGAINST THE WALL WEARING A PINK DRESS WHILE GETTING A BLOW JOB) <ALSO PLAYS GUITAR>

Love is: Love is like a Cracker Jack! You never know when you're gonna bust a nut!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Roses are red, Violets are blue, God I wish I didn't get so drunk and puke on you!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Alf and Pat Sajak (from Wheel of Fortune)

THE ACACIA STRAIN

VINCENT BENNETT (VOCALS)

Love is: being able to slap your boner on her face without consequence.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Cards made of meat. Nothing says, "I love you" more than meat.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Billy Dee Williams and Ashlee Simpson...only because I want that talentless bitch to be horribly violated...and who better than Lando Calrissian?

SCARY KIDS SCARING KIDS

POUYAN S. AFKARY (KEYBOARD)

Love is: sitting through a whole movie on the same armchair no matter how bad the movie... or... smashing one out and not feeling the need to drop a steamy hot load in her eye.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Good ol' Love!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Lil' Bow Wow and Snoopy Doggie Dogg doing it doggy style. Ronald McDonald and Wendy, Hitler and Oprah.

INVOCATION OF NEHEK

ROBB CYR (GUITAR)

Love is: a hot fudge sundae <3 <3

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Dear Valentine, for you my heart burns with the flames of a thousand suns...now that you aren't fat. Plus you didn't lose any weight in the boob department, which is cool. Suck it.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Holly Hunter and Chris "Corky Thatcher" Burke

SKRATCH

MARCIA TAYLOR (WORDSMITH)

Love is: the best thing in the world when it's going right, and the worst thing in the world when it's going wrong.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: "I'm out here/You're in there//Surrounded by other guys/ In their underwear/ Communal showers/ Locked down for hours/ Where's my candy and flowers?/ In the midst of my gloom/ You call me from day room/ you finally got your release date./ Am I willing to wait?/ And while we're on the phone,/ You say "Send Sancho Home./ Because when I'm free/ It'll be just you and me./" Yeah you and me/ And your PO makes three/ Happy Valentine's Day, anyway/ Let's just hope this is the last time/ That you go away."

Ideal celebrity match-up: Courtney Love and Robert Downey, Jr

WESTERN ADDICTION

JASON HALL

Love is: Knowing you have people who care about you. Like when I called my wife and told her we missed our flight home from our East coast tour and her still picking up my musty, grizzly ass at midnight at the airport.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I love you despite the fact that this is a made up commercial

holiday intended to squeeze one last dollar out of you and make you feel guilty for being single and that you are a freak and will die alone with all your cats. Move into your aunt's basement.

Ideal celebrity match-up: I am allowed to make sweet love to the second most beautiful woman in the world if the occasion rises. That woman...Audrey Toutou.

THE SLEEPING

DOUG ROBINSON (VOCALS)

Love is: that awesome phone call or text message that makes such a shitty day worth going through.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Screw Valentine's Day...let's make it all Night!!

Ideal celebrity match-up: hmmmmmm, I'd have to say [me and] the girl who played Punky Brewster...mmmmmmmm.

AMBER PACIFIC

WILL NUTTER (GUITAR, BACKUP VOCALS)

Love is: one of the worlds biggest mysteries because it can hit such opposite sides of the spectrum of love. You can be so happy at any given moment with someone and all of that can change in a matter of seconds and you can be left with the emptiest feeling in your heart.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: They SHOULD always be positive, never apologizing for something. For instance, I was at Hallmark yesterday looking for one and they had one with the title of: I Don't Say It Enough...what?!!?!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Hilary Duff vs. Haley Duff or maybe Eva Longoria vs. the rest of the Desperate Housewives. Then there's always the classic Britney vs. Kevin, or Jessica vs. Nick.

TEACHER'S COLLEGE @ COLUMBIA

MATTHEW SIBLO (GRAD STUDENT/WRITER)

Love is: listening to "I wanna be a homosexual" by Screeching Weasel.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: So, I slept with a family member...

Ideal celebrity match-up: I'd actually like to see a member of Yellowcard, Fall Out Boy, My Chemical Romance etc, pull a (semi) Jerry Lee Lewis and marry one of their 16 year old fans. Bonus if it's a relative.

TEN 33

STEPHEN POORE (VOCALS)

Love is: patient, kind and doesn't keep record of right and wrong.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Yo girl, you lookin' fly on this day of sweet, sweet love. Want to get a pizza and kiss?

Ideal celebrity match-up: Stephen from Ten 33 and Kirsten Dunst

EMANUEL

MATT BREEN

Love is: a bottle of cheap champagne. It's not hard to find, it fucks you up in the best way, and then makes you feel the worst ever AND it's still better than the expensive ones.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Dear Matt, this card entitles you to infinite pussy forever. Love, your friend Tom from Myspace" Hey, I didn't say pussy. It was Tom. But you can say it if you get as much as him. I heard he doesn't even call himself Tom anymore, just "?". This unpronounceable t/d looking symbol. "?" is the new (insert the artist formerly known as Prince symbol, cause it's not an option on my sidekick. Bullshit) Ideal celebrity match-up: [Me and] Clarissa from Clarissa Explains It All. If you're reading this, put the ladder out, I'm coming over. I'll bring the champagne, you just have the whammy bar ready. Thanks, I'll be here all weekend!

CANNAE

COLIN

(DRUMS)

Love is: definitely NOT the first thing I have in mind when looking at a woman.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: It's a pink slip and on the front it says, "Corporate downsizing makes me feel warm and fuzzy." On the inside it says, "Sorry, but you're fired from the Love Department. Best wishes!"

Ideal celebrity match-up: Rob Lind (from the band Ramallah) and a Hilton sister.

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS

MIKE WIEBE (ROOKIE SENSATION)

Love is: a touching and poignant circular comic strip published in fine news publications all over this great United States of America and parts of Japan (where the name translates directly to: #1 naked time-archery boy)

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Front: I give you this card because I love you... Inside: ...and also because this bullshit holiday that was created by Hallmark and florists has whirled you and the coven of confused, depressed, fridged succubae into such a frenzy that you have completely forgotten what I do for you every day. Were it not for this \$4 piece of paper and the \$3 rose I bought at Ralph's, your whining and bitching about me not loving you would sound like the bleating of a sheep in line for slaughter, realizing it's mom just had its throat slit and it is abut to be next. So if this pathetic card is what gets you through your miserable life and your corporate idea of love, please share it with your family and friends. I will be down at the strip club...

Ideal celebrity match-up: The lovely Pam Grier and me

SKRATCH

SCOTT PRESANT (PUBLISHTTER)

Love is: like a train wreck. You just gotta stay on the tracks and steer.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Happy Valentine's, Cunt.

Ideal celebrity match-up: Kermit the Frog and Ron Jeremy

DOGS OF WINTER

BRIAN GROSZ (VOCALS, GUITAR)

Love is: like a carburetor - don't fuck with it unless you really know what you're doing.

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: I know that even if we break up one day... You'll still be my sister. Happy Valentine's Day!

Ideal celebrity match-up: If you're asking me what celebrity I'd like to be matched up with, then the first answer that comes to mind is Claudia Schiffer - followed quite closely by Ambrosia Parsley [singer to Shivarree]. Shit, it's MY ideal match-up. I'll take 'em both with a bottle of Chivas thrown in for good measure. However, if you're asking me what celebrities I'd like to see match-up together with nary a Brian Grosz in the equation, I can't give you an answer - if I'm going to waste brain cells like that, I'm going to do it the right way: with model airplane glue and repeated blunt trauma to the skull.

THE FINALS

MATT REILLY (BASS, VOCALS)

Love is: not having to explain why you didn't say "I love you" when you got off the phone with her...because she just knows!

V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: Remember that time we hung out, had a great time, and then I never called you back? Well I didn't want to set myself up for failure. You're so out of my league! Be my valentine?

Ideal celebrity match-up: Lisa Loeb and me. I think she'd say, "Yes," but I only hear what I want to...so...

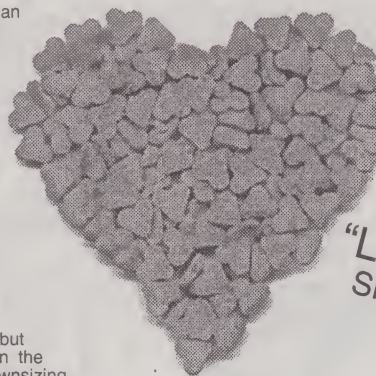
THE FIRST STILL BURNS

NATHAN VORRHEES (GUITAR/BASS)

Love is: unconditional respect and understanding without bias.

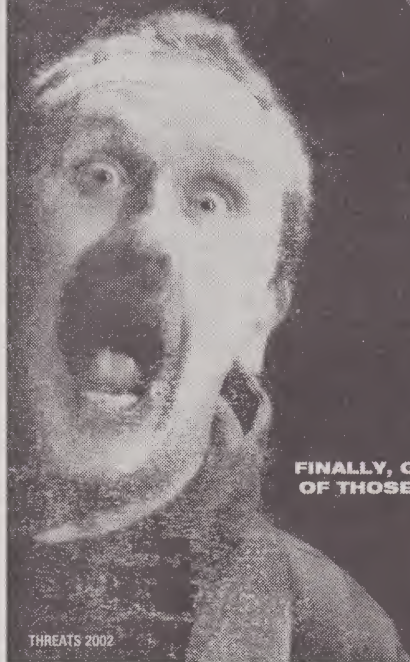
V-Day card that doesn't exist but should: You may have my heart... but the road owns my soul! Happy V-Day baby, see ya in 6 weeks!

Ideal celebrity match-up: Stan Marsh & Wendy Testaburger (South Park)



"LOVE IS A GOOD SMACK ON THE ASS!"

WWW.RAREPUNK.COM



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OF THOSE WHO TAUNT YOU.

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THE NEWS

JOE STRUMMER FILM

Music documentary specialist Julien Temple (*THE FILTH AND THE FURY*) announced his next film will focus on the late, great Joe Strummer of The Clash. Temple said he planned to make a movie "about his life. Not so much about the Clash...It's a film about Joe, about the man, the story of his life, the music before The Clash and after The Clash—as well as about The Clash." Temple has hours of film already, much of which he shot with Strummer before his untimely death in 2002.

(LAST) NIGHT OF THE LIVING SKULLS

March 11 at the Showcase in Corona, The Skulls, sadly, will perform their final show with supporting acts Wrecking Crew, Neon Maniacs, Prima Donna (which features former Skulls member Kevin Preston), and special guests in tow. The Skulls were one of the original (great) L.A. punk bands back in the day, but relatively quickly broke up. Frontman Billy Bones started the band up again in the '90s and released two fabulous studio albums on Dr. Strange and a live record.

A TRUE KING OF PUNK

On January 30, Poison Idea guitarist Pig Champion (Thomas Roberts) died in Portland, Oregon. One of the founding members of the seminal hardcore band that released a number of records, beginning with 1983's *PICK YOUR KING*, by the time of 1986's *KINGS OF PUNK*, Roberts christened himself Pig Champion when he blew up to 450 pounds. When Pig Champion left in the early '90s, the band dissolved and released *PIG'S LAST STAND*, a recording of their final gig. Poison Idea, however, came back (albeit with line-up changes) and put out more records, the last being '04's *FEEL THE DARKNESS*.

R.I.P. RKL FRONTMAN

RKL (Rich Kids on LSD) frontman Jason Sears died at the end of January. The Santa Barbara band were major contributors to '80s/'90s punk. Sears fronted RKL from '83-'89 and again from '94-'96. In 2001, *KEEP LAUGHING—THE BEST OF RKL* (Mystic) came out. After his time

with the band, Sears recorded *JASON SEARS AND MERCURY LEGION* (Malt Soda), which was released last spring.

I'M A WHORE FOR...

Cheap Sex are working on 15 new songs for their third LP for Punk Core to be titled *WRITTEN IN BLOOD*. In support of its release, the hard-charging street punks will head out in the summer with labelmates The Scarred. Hear "Russian Roulette" (no, it's not a Lords of the New Church cover...!) from the new album at: www.myspace.com/punkcore.

DARKEST HOUR MANIA

Darkest Hour's headlining *REVOLVER*-sponsored tour with Himsa, A Life Once Lost, The Acacia Strain, and Dead To Fall runs from February 17 until April 1. They announced that their 12-minute instrumental opus "Veritas, Aequitas" (from '04's *HIDDEN HANDS OF A SADIST NATION*), will be played at select dates (announcements posted on www.darkesthour.cc), and they're going to pull some older material out too. Moreover, DH entered the studio in January to re-mix and re-master their first Victory album, *SO SEDATED, SO SECURE* (out March 7).

PHOENIX RISING

Tampa's Phoenix Mourning, a screamo/metalcore band, was picked up by Metal Blade. Their debut, which will be produced by Tom Morris (Morbld Angel, Cannibal Corpse) and titled *WHEN EXCUSES BECOME ANTIQUES*, comes out April 18.

TRUSTKILL DRAW FIRST BLOOD

San Francisco metallic hardcore band First Blood have signed with Trustkill. The band, which features ex-Terror bassist Cari Schwartz on vocals, are working on their debut for Trustkill and look to release it in the spring. They have some shows scheduled with Ignite and Comeback Kid for the end of February into March. Check www.myspace.com/firstblood.

SAD BUT TRUE

Transplants frontman Skinhead Rob confirmed the rumors about the band

breaking up, which began after they canceled their fall tour. The guys, who released two albums during the band's lifespan will still be busy, of course, as Skinhead Rob has Expensive Tastes, Tim Armstrong has Rancid, and Travis Barker has Plus 44.

NOT A FATAL BLOW

400 Blows guitarist Christian left the L.A. band last month after releasing their last album last spring, *ANGEL'S TRUMPETS AND DEVIL'S TROMBONES* (GSL). The two remaining members, vocalist Skot and drummer Ferdinand, will soldier on and are seeking another guitarist to round out the line-up of the outta-control punk/metal band.

NO KIDDING

Nitro punks No Trigger release *CANYONEER* March 21 and have some songs up at www.myspace.com/notrigger, including the female-empowering "More to Offer".

THEY'RE GOING TO HELL FOR THIS ONE

NOFX's new EP, *NEVER TRUST A HIPPIY* is out March 14. Two of the six songs included will later appear on their next LP, *WOLVES IN WOLVES' CLOTHING*, out April 18. Fat Wreck Chords wants to make a couple things clear in regard to the upcoming full-length: It's 18 songs, about 35 minutes and there are no hip-hop beats or Cream influences. Check www.fatwreck.com.

GREELEY ESTATES AND THE CONFESSION TO TASTE SOME CHAOS

Greeley Estates and The Confession head out with Deftones, Thrice, Atreyu, and the rest of the second Taste of Chaos tour, kicking off February 16. Greeley Estates are currently in the studio in L.A. recording their second full-length album, out this spring. The Confession meet up with the TOC tour in Florida after February dates with Avenged Sevenfold.

FREYA PLANS

Freya release *LIFT THE CURSE* (Victory) in May. For now you can check out a previously-unreleased track, "Born In Blood", at: www.myspace.com/freya or www.freya315.com.

Also, they're playing the PETA2 Fest in Boston February 25.

SEXXXY

MTV's Website reported that The Eagles of Death Metal, who are to release their sophomore album, *DEATH BY SEXY*, April 11, have been confirmed as the support act for all of the dates on The Strokes spring tour, which begins March 3 in NYC.

OUR LAST NEWS ITEM

Veteran punks Toy Dolls, who've said they will release a favorites collection within the next year, have added some new members to the lineup: guitarist Duncan Redmonds and bassist Tommy "Goobar" Blyth, who'll play on the band's global "Our Last Tour". The tour's moniker goes along with their latest releases: *OUR LAST ALBUM* and *OUR LAST DVD*.

WITH NOT DISTASTE

Baltimore political grindcore/metal purveyors Misery Index recently signed to Relapse and are presently recording their still-untitled debut LP for the label, set for a May release. They've also announced a tour for May with like-minded acts Disfear and Phobia. Check www.relapse.com.

DECONTROL

Controlling The Famous have finished recording their debut full-length record, entitled *AUTOMATIC CITY*, with Alex Newport (At The Drive-In, Panthers). It should be released in the spring. Hear a demo of "Heart Attack" at Emotional Punk: www.emotionalpunk.com/mp3/Controllin_g_The_Famous-Heart_Attack.mp3

HASTE THE DAY HAPPENINGS

Haste the Day welcome Stephen Keech as vocalist for the band on their upcoming tour with Bleeding Through, Every Time I Die, and Between the Buried and Me, which runs now through March 1. In April, the band is to commence writing new material for their next album.

BOW JOIN SLF

Ireland's Blood or Whiskey will join seminal punk band Stiff Little Fingers on their U.K. tour. Since the release of BOW's *CASHED OUT ON CULTURE* in March '05, the band have been at the forefront of the current Irish-infused punk trend. For info on the band and dates see: www.myspace.com/blood-orwhiskey.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

L.A. Punk/dub purveyors Future Pigeon release *THE ECHODELIC SOUNDS OF FUTURE PIGEON* April 11. The band draw upon elements of dub/reggae, psychedelic rock, Afro-beat, and death disco, taking the experimental slant of Lee Perry and Can, and fusing it with the punk sensibilities of The Clash to create a sound all their own. See: www.futurepigeon.com.

PUMP UP THE VOLUME-FACE THE MUSIC

The Who's Pete Townshend has a warning for all you iPod users: you may face irreparable hearing damage if you don't keep the volume down. The legendary guitarist said his hearing has been damaged badly by years of using studio headphones and now he must take 36-hour breaks between recording sessions. On his Website he said, "I have unwittingly helped to invent and refine a type of music that makes its principal [users] deaf."

THIS AIN'T NO RINGLING BROS.' PRODUCTION

The International Ska Circus takes place March 10-11 in Las Vegas at Clark County Amphitheatre and features The Skatalites, Toasters, Pletasters, Reel Big Fish, Voodoo Glowskulls, Fishbone, and The Skeletones, as well as La Banda Skalavera, Westbound

Train, Suburban Legends, The Debonaires, Super Pineapples, and Goldfish Don't Bounce. The Circus makes its American debut after sold-out jaunts in London and Prague.

NOW THEY'RE HAPPY

Reel Big Fish are off Jive and that's just fine with them. After four years and two full-lengths, RBF can now pursue more daring opportunities that didn't fit into the corporate scheme of things and Jive will continue to search for the next big boy-band. RBF are overseas touring now and then play the International Ska Circus. They'll soon announce their summer touring plans. www.reelbigfish.com

THEY'VE MADE THE BIG-TIME

At the end of January, Motley Crue received their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Bassist Nikki Sixx purportedly told fans, "We're across the street from the Erotica Museum and Frederick's of Hollywood. This is a perfect place for us to be."

AND NOW... TOMMY LEE NEWS

Bruce Sinofsky, one of the directors of METALLICA: *SOME KIND OF MONSTER*, will make a documentary on Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee. According to Sinofsky, the still-untitled film "seeks a candid glimpse behind the celebrity and tabloid personality into who Tommy really is, watching him interact with family, friends, and business associates."

NODES TOURING HARDCORE

Fresh off their tour with Sinal Beach, Nodes of Ranvier announced the dates for their outing with Still Remains, If Hope Dies, and Demiricous. The tour runs from March till May. It also sees the band playing Facedown Fest March 31 in Pomona, CA. Check www.facedownrecords.com.

HARDCORE '81

The 98-minute documentary *AMERICAN HARDCORE: THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN PUNK ROCK 1980-1986* by Paul Rachman and inspired by Steven Blush's authoritative tome *AMERICAN HARDCORE: A TRIBAL HISTORY*, was screened at the Sundance Film Festival last month. The film deals with the most influential bands of the era, including D.O.A., MDC, TSOL, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Agnostic Front, Youth Brigade, and Minor Threat, to name a few. Screenings are in the works for other cities. www.myspace.com/americanhardcore-film.

CHRONICLES OF A HEADBANGER

METAL: A HEADBANGER'S JOURNEY will be released February 24 in Canada. The documentary (the first-ever in-depth film made on the subject) follows Sam Dunn, a professional anthropologist, long-time heavy-metal fan, and practitioner through his own band, in a worldwide trek, as he searches for the source of the mythology surrounding the genre. The film features such greats as Alice Cooper, Dee Snider, Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi, and Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson and looks at the genre's beginnings, through doom and thrash, hair-metal, black metal, and today's metalcore phenomenon. www.metalhistory.com.

THEY GOT THE ANTIDOTE

Fearless act SoTheySay have posted "Over-Exposed Photo" from their upcoming album *ANTIDOTE FOR IRONY* on PureVolume.com. You like? Pre-order the album at www.fearlessrecords.com. It hits the streets March 7.

BYE BYE BIBLE SCHOOL

That silly "Intelligent design" was issued another blow as a group of parents in

Fresno sued the El Tejon school system, accusing it of violating separation of church and state with a high-school course called "Philosophy of Design," taught by a minister's wife. In the settlement, the district agreed to halt the course and said it would never again offer a "course that promotes or endorses creationism, creation science, or intelligent design." This is a big win, as it shows schools nationwide they can't offer anti-evolution courses in science OR humanities classes.

THIS STONE'S FOR YOU

A kidney stone passed by the ubiquitous William Shatner was sold for \$25,000 by GoldenPalace.com. The idea may be gross and disconcerting, but at least the money is going to a housing charity, Habitat for Humanity.

UNSTOPPABLE

The Casualties DVD, *CAN'T STOP US* (SideOneDummy), comes out March 7. Included on the disc are live shows, behind-the-scenes footage of the punks on the road, and interviews. The band will be on tour with Anti-Flag and The Unseen throughout March and April. www.sideonedummy.com

WAR OF AGES

Facedown has signed metallic hardcore warriors War of Ages, who just released their self-titled debut full-length last year. Their label debut will be recorded in June at Trax East Studios. They're presently on tour with Hell Within and in March head out with Bloody Sunday. Go to www.facedownrecords.com for more.

WELCOME TO 1984

On January 16, former VP Al Gore called for an independent counsel to look into President George W. Bush's controversial secret eavesdropping program. Gore said a probe "can rebuild confidence in our system of justice," pressing that Attorney General Alberto Gonzales should appoint a special counsel to address "obvious conflicts of interest" that prevent investigations of what many believe to be law violations by Bush. The Senate Judiciary Committee plans to hold hearings as early as this month.

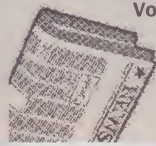
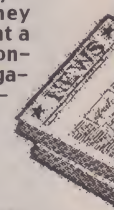
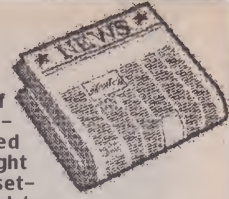
THE PARTY'S NOT QUITE OVER

With the release of their new live CD/DVD, *SMOKING POPES AT METRO* (Victory) February 28, The Smoking Popes announce a North American tour from February 22 to March 12, with Bayside, who's *ACOUSTICA* CD/DVD (Victory) is in stores the same day. Smoking Popes have been a staple in the punk/Indie scenes since the '90s and helped shape a generation of music fans. The band, who formed in '91, broke up in '98, and then reunited last year, playing Chicago's Metro November 11. For dates: www.victoryrecords.com.

Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Nick Zinner and The Locust's Gabe Serbian. They're writing for the follow-up to *LOVE IN THE FASCIST BROTHEL* out later this year. TPBTUTET hit the road again February 23, pick up Genghis Tron March 7, and play South by Southwest March 17 and 18.

THE NEWS is compiled by Janelle.

Email us in with your handy-dandy news at: skratchnews@hotmail.com. Read Skratchmagazine.com for more news.





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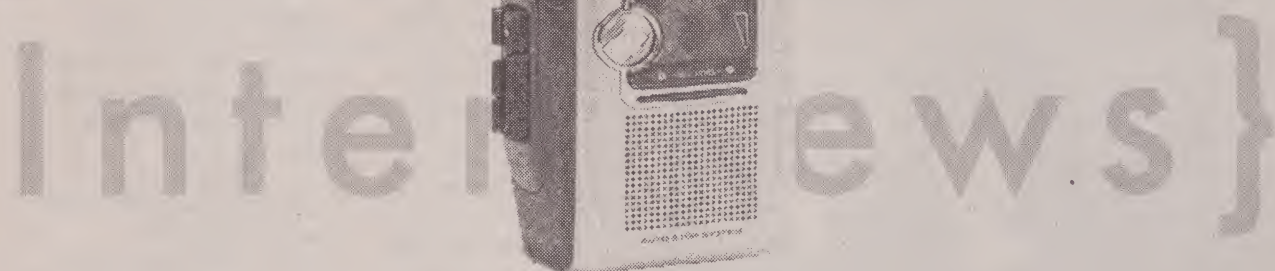
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EXENE

CERVENKA



Exene Cervenka & the Original Sinners By Janelle Jones

Led by the enterprising, always-on-the-move punk luminary lending her name to the band, Exene Cervenka and the Original Sinners aren't your run-of-the-mill punk band, something exhibited to great effect by their highly-diverse second album, *SEVEN* (Nitro). And who in his/her right mind would ever think anything Exene would be a part of could be TYPICAL?! After all, this is the woman who (along with John Doe, Billy Zoom, and D.J. Bonebrake) was a frontrunner in the early days of the California punk scene with X, an outfit that creatively incorporated elements of rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, country, and folk to fashion some of the most memorable and passionate music of the era.

Since their self-titled debut LP, The Sinners have had a line-up shake-up, with new arrivals Dan Sabella (guitar), Chris Powers

(bass), and Kevin O'Conner (drums)—all from St. Louis's 7 Shot Screamer's—joining a fold that also includes longtime guitarist Jason Edge.

Here is just a taste of the conversation SKRATCH had with Exene.

SKRATCH: First of all, why did you change the name of the band from just The Original Sinners?

EXENE: Because people didn't know it was my band, and that sucks. I've heard people say, "Oh, I didn't know that was your band" or just not come out to see the band play because they don't know who it is; it's just another of 500 bands coming through town. [...] I generally don't like to [use my name like] that—that's why I didn't do it in the first place—but if it helps people find out about it....

SKRATCH: [...] The first record is more aggressive than this one, but I actually like this one better. There's just something really charming about it.

EXENE: Oh, thank you. You're right about the first one being more aggressive, I think. This one's more surf and psychedelic kinda stuff and has some pretty passages. The first record was pretty well-rounded; we had instrumentals and all kinds of stuff. I like them both. The thing is, once you make two or three records, they just kinda all blend together; and if you've covered enough territory in that, then you've got a good band. It doesn't really matter too much if you repeat what you did the first time.

SKRATCH: One song in particular I love is "Long Distance." It has such a beautiful sense of longing.

EXENE: Yeah. That's about my friend who died and [my getting] the phone call that he died really suddenly down in Texas. And it's that feeling of: You really don't want that phone call; and you know sometimes when the phone rings, you get that feeling—and sure enough, something really bad has happened. That's what it's about; kinda like protesting against it really happening.

SKRATCH: You always write intelligent and witty lyrics. Some of the phrases are great. I love in "Tavern" that line: "I don't remember, was it a fender on a pickup or a pickup on a Fender?" Genius.

EXENE: Right. My favorite line on that record is "the disappeared are everywhere" (from "Down Where It's Down"), because after a while, if you've lived long enough, everywhere you used to go is like, "Well, I used to go here with my friend, but he's not here anymore." I just feel like all my dead friends [are] standing at the top of the stairs saying "hi" as I come into the dressing room.

SKRATCH: How do you go about writing?

EXENE: Well, I go about it in different ways. Sometimes something just pops into your head and you just get an idea and write it down, and then maybe a couple more lines will come

after that. Usually then I'll put it together with other things I've written. I also force myself to write sometimes—like, I'll just bring a notebook and a pen out to go somewhere and sit in a coffeehouse and write; or write at home. You have to force yourself; you can't always be inspired by something you see—so I just keep it going kinda constantly.

SKRATCH: Do you throw a lot of stuff away, too?

EXENE: Oh yeah, sure. I don't know what the ratio is, but I still go back to my old journal sometimes to get ideas or to get lines from something I've written—because they're in there; they're just surrounded by shit. I try not to censor myself when I write, because I figure no one's gonna read it but me, so I can be as silly or as sophomoric as I want. If I wanna write "I love you, I love you, I love you," then I write that down. It's not gonna be a song necessarily.

SKRATCH: You write poetry, as well. Do you ever take from that?

EXENE: Oh yeah. It's all the same stuff to me.

SKRATCH: You had an art show recently.

EXENE: Yeah. [right now] it's in Chelsea. I had an art show in Santa Monica. Then when that show ended, it went to NY. It's gone really well. It's much like the writing: there's some funny stuff mixed in with collages and stuff I've collected over the years (like 30 years or more), so that's put together to make either really cohesive pieces or really abstract pieces. I can't really describe it. It's colorful.

SKRATCH: So you're basically doing everything, art-wise.

EXENE: Yeah, except acting. I don't like acting.

SKRATCH: Did you ever try?

EXENE: Yeah. I don't like it at all.

SKRATCH: If you didn't move to California, do you think you would've pursued all this?

"I CAN'T REALLY DESCRIBE IT. IT'S COLORFUL!"

EXENE: Yeah, I was doing it even before I moved to California. I was only 20 when I moved, but I had those three or four years right when you're a teenager and you're starting to figure things out where I was doing a lot of art. I wouldn't have done music, probably; I would've probably gone to New York and done art. But who knows? That's where I ended up; that's what I ended up doing. I got lucky and met John [Doe].

SKRATCH: Right. Back then, though, it must've been so thrilling, music-wise, because there was no blueprint.

EXENE: L.A. was thrilling. You have no idea how thrilling that was. I was so grateful to be... Even in the middle of all that, when you're young and all you can think about is having fun and making music and just all that stuff, I would stop often and go, "Just look around where you are right

now, because this is amazing. You're so lucky to be here." And everyone else felt the same way. People who were in bands, people who weren't in bands, people who wrote about it, people who took pictures of it—everybody was just in a state of awe that they were there, because it really was exciting. And it's not just because the quality of the music was good (because there were a lot of great bands like The Plugz and Germs and X, I guess), but it was more just the community of people that was thrilling, just being there with all those people.

SKRATCH: Do you get some of the same feelings being onstage now with X, like looking around you and seeing the guys?

EXENE: It's more fun for me now because it's so much easier now. Before I was always worried that someone was gonna be spitting on me

or throwing things at me or that I wasn't gonna be singing the songs right—so I'd be too drunk to care. And now, it's just like, We're a band, we're a really good band that plays and has fun. I like it better now, on some levels. I mean, I don't like the fact that there's no scene around it—I miss all that—but I like being onstage an awful lot now.

The Sinners will be on tour starting March. And for all you X fans, Exene says she and John have been working on material for a new record! www.exenecervenka.com

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From Phoenix Arizona

Unearth
By Tim Posada

The days of signing softer bands like The Goo Goo Dolls are over, as Metal Blade have become the leaders in metalcore preservation, what with having on their roster the likes of Lamb of God and As I Lay Dying. With 2004's *THE ONCOMING STORM*, Unearth have secured their future in the Metal Blade family. But Metal Blade was just the climax of Unearth's success. These Massachusetts boys developed a fan base through constant touring and a blend of Euro metal and punk with memorable breakdowns.

Unearth are currently in the calm before the storm, with no tours scheduled or a set date for their next release. Lead singer Trevor Phipps spilled some secrets via e-mail on where they have been and where they are going.

SKRATCH: How did Unearth form?

TREVOR: My old band Second Division used to play a lot of shows with a band called Point 04, which was the entire first lineup of Unearth (minus me, of course). We liked each other's style, and we decided to try something new one day-and Unearth was born.

SKRATCH: What was that "something new" that you all were aiming for? Did Unearth go in the direction you were expecting, or was it an entirely different sound?

TREVOR: The sound we took on was something new at that time. We formed in August of 1998 [...] mixing the sounds of the bands we grew up loving-at that time, the guitar harmonies of Iron Maiden mixed with the brutality of Hatebreed; the metal sounds of Testament, Pantera, and Crowbar; and [...] the urgency of old-school hardcore (Sick of it All, Slapshot, etc.)-which had never been done before. We had all been in bands since we were kids but never really were 100% happy with everything. We all tried to make the listener happy instead of focusing on what we actually liked. Unearth set out to write music we liked-and if no one else liked it, we didn't care. We just wanted to create music and have fun with it. It turned out that people dug it. If you are not a fan of your own music, then you cannot expect anyone else to be.

SKRATCH: What's your songwriting process like?

TREVOR: Usually, Buz or Ken bring a few riffs to the table and we piece a song together. The lyrics and vocals come after the song is in a good place.

SKRATCH: Are there ever disagreements on songs? How does Unearth resolve those tensions?

TREVOR: There are always disagreements on songs. Sometimes, the more feedback, pushing and pulling, the better the song. If every

one puts all their effort and heart into a tune, then it generally comes out better. We are a democracy, and if four dudes love a part and one dude hates it, then we will more than likely keep it. However, we do try to make everyone happy with every part of the song.

SKRATCH: How do you keep your voice going for continual shows?

TREVOR: Lots of whiskey.

SKRATCH: Unearth's lyrics appear politically-charged. Why such a focus on the issues mentioned in such songs as "The Great Dividers" and "Black Hearts Now Reign"?

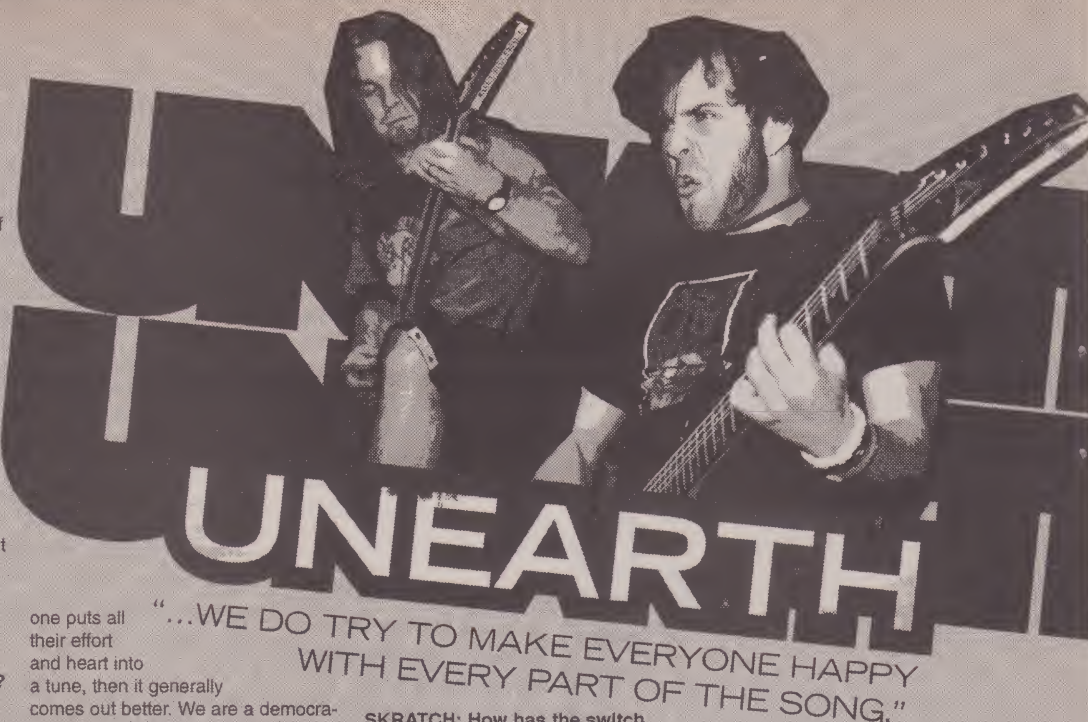
TREVOR: The overconsumption of oil and the overaggressive nature of our current government are two things that struck a chord in me enough to write a song about them.

SKRATCH: Do you see your songs as anthemic about what is wrong, songs that propose a solution, or as something else entirely?

TREVOR: People can view my lyrics however they want to. The last thing I want is to be looked at as a preacher. Music is about having fun and letting go of the everyday bullshit that consumes all of our lives. If people take a message out of some of the political songs I have, then I applaud them for it. The only thing I can do is educate myself on a subject that inspires me, write about it, and inform the people who care to listen. The solutions to the problems we are all facing are with all of us, not in any songs.

SKRATCH: Where does the band's inspiration come from?

TREVOR: We are inspired from so many different angles. My father is big into rock 'n' roll, so he got the ball rolling with me. Ken and Mike both come from families that have musicians in them. We all have bands that we grew up listening to that have inspired us to do what we do, etc. The inspiration mainly comes from within, though. We love music, and we couldn't be happier doing this as a job.



"...WE DO TRY TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY WITH EVERY PART OF THE SONG."

SKRATCH: How has the switch from Eulogy to Metal Blade been?

TREVOR: Metal Blade treats us like gold, and we are happy as hell there.

SKRATCH: How's touring been?

TREVOR: We tour eight months a year. It is our bread and butter as a metal band. We love traveling the world, meeting new people, and playing music for fans of our tunes.

SKRATCH: What is your favorite place to go on tour?

TREVOR: I like to go anywhere that makes us feel welcome. As far as what I like to do on tour, I like to take walks in each city and town, breathe in the air, meet the people, eat the local food, and soak up the local atmosphere.

SKRATCH: Do you prefer bigger venues or smaller ones?

TREVOR: Each has their own charm. Smaller clubs are more intimate, more energetic and simply more fun. But something needs to be said for thousands of fans reacting positively to your songs in a large venue or festival crowd. The feeling you get from looking out to thousands of faces focused on you and the music you created is unexplainably awesome.

SKRATCH: What's the band's next big move?

TREVOR: We are currently writing a new record, and it is due out this summer. A huge tour will follow.

SKRATCH: What are the plans for the next album?

TREVOR: We are stepping out on a limb and going with different engineers, producers, and mixers on this record. People like Terry Date (Pantera, Deftones, Soundgarden, Dredge, etc.) and Ross Robinson (Slipknot, Korn, Sepultura, etc.) are likely to work with us on this record. We want this album to be the biggest thing metal has seen since [Pantera's] *VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER* hit in 1992.

SKRATCH: Along with the different production of the album, are your songs going to take new form, or will they have a similar sound to your previous albums?

TREVOR: Unearth is Unearth, and we carry our influences on our sleeve, even though those influences range from many sources. Right now we are about halfway done writing the record, and it is faster and darker than the last album. A lot of our peers are going the formulaic route of "heavy part, singing chorus, heavy part, breakdown, singing chorus." That works for some bands-namely, Killswitch Engage-but it doesn't work for everyone. Unless it is done right, that formula straight up pisses me off. That trend has only inspired us to go the opposite direction and write a heavier and more evil-sounding record.

SKRATCH: Have you guys had any weird stories happen to you on the road or while recording?

TREVOR: Weird shit happens all the time. The problem is trying to remember everything. I do know that we left Mike at a gas station in the middle of the desert once. He was there for hours before we realized he was gone. Cell-phone reception was shot, and he couldn't get a hold of us. Bummer for him! It did suck to have to turn around and drive back a couple hours to get him, though, so it sucked for all of us.

Unearth may have come from the hard/metalcore capital of North America, but their fans don't confuse them with any of the other recyclable metal. For more information on Unearth, go to www.unearth.tv, www.metalblade.com, or www.myspace.com/unearth.



IN FLAMES
By Brett Powell

It's been 10 years since In Flames began, and they are about to embark on their most triumphant quest to date. Having started out in Gothenburg, Sweden, they have grown to be one of the biggest metal acts on the planet. **COME CLARITY**, their seventh full-length album, will hit stores in the U.S. on February 7th and is their first release on the American independent label Ferret Records. They will tour the world in support of the new record.

Guitarist Bjorn Gelotte sat down to speak with me about life, music, and the new In Flames record right before they took the stage in front of a sold-out amphitheater full of 2,300+ loyal fans at the Wiltern Theatre in L.A. (The other member of the band are Anders Friden—vocals, Daniel Svensson—drums, Jesper Stromblad—guitar, Peter Iwers—bass.)

SKRATCH: How does it feel to be on an American label now?

BJORN: It feels good. Americans were running Nuclear Blast, but they were very influenced by the European ways, and we had some issues with them—mainly, that we wanted to change to a label that was run by Americans who know how to work this completely different market than Europe. Everything's going great so far—how everything's set up, the plans for the future. The communication is very fast and easy. We're really looking forward to it. We don't know how it's going to go yet (since the record isn't out), but I have a great feeling about it. When we asked if any label in the U.S. was interested, we got a great response! Everyone was interested. But it's not about the money, its not about the paycheck: it's about the ideas, it's about making In Flames bigger. We could have gotten a fat check with a major record label, but they might not have cared in a few years. The best ideas and best marketing plans that in the end will benefit In Flames came from Ferret.

SKRATCH: You finished recording **COME CLARITY** in April of '05. Do these songs still feel fresh since you finished the record almost a year ago?

BJORN: We haven't played any of them live, really. (We played one song on a radio thing in Gothenburg.) They will be fresh for a couple of years, probably. I don't listen to the albums very much; we play it so much live that I have no need to listen to the record. We've played some songs thousands of times live! I think these songs on the new record will hold up for a while.

SKRATCH: At any point during your career did you feel it wouldn't work out, that you wouldn't be successful with In Flames?

BJORN: The only time I doubted it was when I had to decide if I was going to do this full-time. There comes a time where you have to decide if you should keep a job or put all your time into the band. Luckily, now I can sit here and drink beer and still pay bills at home. I was a bit nervous about the choice at first, but everything turned out for the best. If you're doing it for the right reasons, I don't feel it's a hard choice—and we are doing it for ourselves and not for labels, management, or other people either. Even though people love our music, we're not doing it for them: we're doing it for ourselves. We spend hours every night just thinking of what our set list will be. If you do it for the right reasons, you can stay around forever. If people like it, that's an awesome bonus. We get to play in front of 2,300 people in L.A. It's going to be really cool, and people will notice that you're doing it for the right reasons and not just following the trend. I think trends always go around in circles. If you stick to your guns, you won't have as many problems.

SKRATCH: What can you recommend to other bands to help get them up to the point that you have reached as a band?

BJORN: Touring. Take any opportunity to tour or play live. Being in the rehearsal room will help you perfect your instru-

IN FLAMES

**"THAT'S MY ONLY ADVICE: THE way we record and do
PLAY LIVE ANY CHANCE YOU GET."**

ment skills, but you won't get anywhere unless you start touring. It's gonna suck for the first couple of years, but if you stick with it, it will pay off. It will make you a leader and not a follower. That's my only advice: play live any chance you get.

SKRATCH: Where do you find your influence to write all of the music for In Flames?

BJORN: If you would have asked me this five or eight years ago, it would have been a lot easier to answer, [because] the influences would have been more obvious. Now it's really about what we think works live. We've learned a lot so far from all the albums leading up to the latest one.

"This was good... This was not so good... Let's fix that on the next one." I don't need to listen to other people's music to get inspired; music is there all the time. I'm very open-minded when it comes to music—even though I'm very traditional when it comes to favorites. I don't look for inspiration: [music is just] what I do; I don't know how to do anything else. I don't know how to paint or build a car; I know how to build songs.

SKRATCH: How are the girls in Sweden?

BJORN: Awesome. Probably the best. Very good-looking. That's a rule, basically. I don't know why. There is only one country that actually beats Sweden when it comes to chicks: that's Norway. I don't know why. They got the oil, they got the chicks. They are really, really cute [there].

SKRATCH: How was the songwriting process on **COME CLARITY** different from the process you took to write the other records?

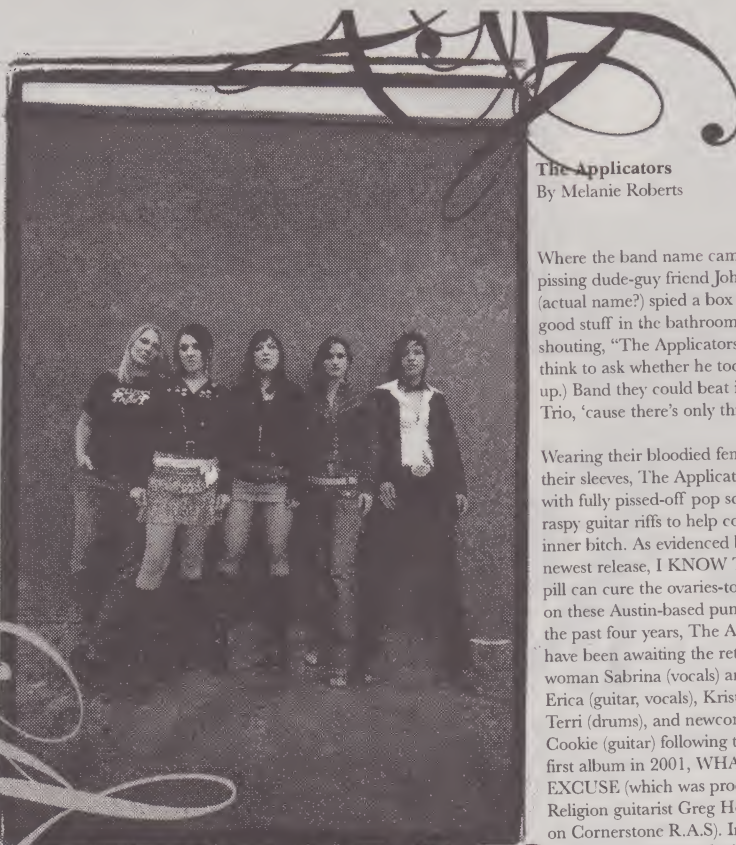
BJORN: We have written our music basically the same way since [...] I joined and started working together with the other guys. The only thing that has changed is

pre-production on demos. And who we're working with, who's producing it, who's mixing it. [Those are] the only things that have changed. This album is more geared towards the audience, to playing live. We've learned from our mistakes on some of the other albums. We've learned what songs work live and what songs don't work live. There's a lot of great songs on the albums that we want to play, but they just don't work live. This record is what all the others have been leading up to. We've done what we've always done and will do. There will be a time when no one is interested, obviously, but who cares? I love each and every song. [They're] something we've worked really hard on, and we're really proud of all of our music. The songs are why I am here. It's not why I play music, but without these songs I wouldn't be playing in front of these people tonight.

SKRATCH: What's next for In Flames?

BJORN: You always have small goals; you have ambitions, things you want to accomplish. This is gonna make me sound really old, but after 10 years, the immediate dreams and goals are... Well, you know, you can take your time. If you've lasted this long, you know you can last another 10 years or whatever. That's what's important to us. We still hang out after 10 years, still go out to the same bars, still hanging out when we're not on tour. That's what's really special. As long as the writing is still cool, I'm not in a hurry to get anywhere else.

COME CLARITY will be released February 3rd in Europe on Nuclear Blast Records and on February 7th in the U.S. on Ferret Records. You can visit www.inflames.com for tour dates and more information on the band.



The Applicators
By Melanie Roberts

Where the band name came from: drunken, pissing dude-guy friend Johnnie Walker (actual name?) spied a box of the cotton good stuff in the bathroom and ran out shouting, "The Applicators!" (Sadly, I didn't think to ask whether he took the time to zip up.) Band they could beat in a fight: Alkaline Trio, 'cause there's only three of them.

Wearing their bloodied feminine wounds on their sleeves, The Applicators are crying out with fully pissed-off pop screams and nasty, raspy guitar riffs to help connect everyone's inner bitch. As evidenced by the band's newest release, *I KNOW THE TRUTH*, no pill can cure the ovaries-to-the-wall attitudes on these Austin-based punk/pop queens. For the past four years, The Applicators fans have been awaiting the return of front-woman Sabrina (vocals) and her sistercats Erica (guitar, vocals), Kristina (bass, vocals), Terri (drums), and newcomer (as of 2003) Cookie (guitar) following the release of their first album in 2001, *WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE* (which was produced by Bad Religion guitarist Greg Hetson and released on Cornerstone R.A.S.). In late 2005, fans' prayers were answered with the arrival of *I KNOW THE TRUTH*.

In what must have been a moment of vulnerability, Sabrina graciously agreed to speak with SKRATCH about the new album.

Minutes into our conversation, I discover that Sabrina is not just into the infamous estrogen-charged, raging femmes of the day such as Blondie, Joan Jett (fuck yeah!), Mia Zapata, and The Runaways; rather, she throws me a curveball and shares her soft spot for the Queen of Soul, Ms. Aretha Franklin. She also confesses that her greatest pull to music comes from her grandfather's intoxicating saxophone playing, which somehow helped shape her into the angst-ridden, back-clawing vixen of the stage she is today. It's official: I am...intrigued.

SKRATCH: What fascinates you the most about your favorite female artists?

SABRINA: Women who are so true and can evoke an emotion in one vowel with their vocals. Young fans-girls especially-[often] say to me, "I understand what you're saying, and I relate." If it were for one person, it would be worth all of it.

SKRATCH: How and when did the band form?

SABRINA: It was in 1999. Erica and I knew each other since we were 14. We've always been in bands. The other girls were in bands, too. So, when [I wanted to put together a band,] I saw these girls who played with guys and always held their own.

SKRATCH: So, "The Applicators" is an interesting name. What were some of the other choices you were kicking around? What made you go with this one?

SABRINA: It was like seven years ago, so I can't even remember. It was a good name,

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though.

It's just tough, 'cause my daughter [Miya] is in kindergarten now, and when I talk to other parents about [being in a band] they always ask our name. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Who's the biggest feminist in the group?

SABRINA: We're all feminists, but I think Cookie or me. I spent the better part of the '90s writing for and about women. [That's when] I learned how to turn writing into music.

SKRATCH: Who in the band is most likely to get into trouble? What kind of trouble?

SABRINA: Cookie. She's the youngest and on the edge. She really doesn't care what anyone thinks. Kristina's like that, too. We can all be confrontational, if necessary.

SKRATCH: You've done quite a bit of touring and with some pretty serious acts and artists. Around whom did you feel the most star-struck?

SABRINA: BUZZCOCKS! They were so funny and normal. And I ran into Beck at the [2003] Reading and Leeds Festivals [in

the U.K.] and was mumbling and didn't get it out that we were playing the festival, too.

SKRATCH: Which new bands are you listening to?

SABRINA: I've been on a kick for The Faint. There's also a new band called Crash Gallery; I've been obsessing about their demos.

SKRATCH: What's the most embarrassing album you ever purchased?

SABRINA: Um, I don't know. I just bought [the] Ashlee Simpson [album] for Miya.

SKRATCH: Yeah, but what about YOUR most embarrassing record? I'll tell you mine if you tell me yours. Mine is JUSTIFIED by Justin Timberlake. Now you go.

SABRINA: [Laughs] Huh, yeah. I don't think there's anything that I'm embarrassed about buying.

SKRATCH: What's the most messed-up thing you've witnessed while touring?

SABRINA: We were on tour with The Epoxies, and a friend of ours, Josh, was helping them out because their RV broke down. Josh let The Epoxies use his RV; he drove it, though. Anyway, Josh is a cop, and he has this cop dog. One night after a show, Kristina [walked into the RV and] startled the dog. [The dog] attacked Kristina and had [Kristina's] whole head in her mouth.

SKRATCH: Her head was in the dog's MOUTH? That's incredible...and horrible.

SABRINA: Yeah. She's okay. She was PISSed, but she's over it.

So, ladies, to get a heavy flow of emotional release set to music, send your love slaves to the store to pick up The Applicators' I KNOW THE TRUTH; and visit the band online at www.myspace.com/theapplicators.

To comment on this or any other interview you see in SKRATCH, feel free to e-mail us at speakup@skratchmagazine.com.

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SWORN ENEMY



Sworn Enemy
by Mike SOS

When speaking to lead throat Sal over the phone while the Queens, NY, quintet were on tour with Anthrax, we spoke about his NYHC roots, his experience recording their scorching new release, *THE BEGINNING OF THE END*, and some guilty pleasures and pranks the boys partake in while on the road.

SKRATCH: How was recording the new album different from previous studio experiences (like, who'd you work with, stuff like that)?

SAL: Well, for this one, we flew out to California. We went to San Diego to Big Fish Studios and worked with Tim from As I Lay Dying, who also engineered it. It was basically the same thing [...] as recording *AS REAL AS IT GETS*, [except for this we were] flying out and staying at a hotel every night. But the process wasn't really much different [...] San Diego is a hell of a trek from New York.

SKRATCH: What was the best part about recording in San Diego?

SAL: The final product, the way it sounded. I mean, to me, it was like night and day from *AS REAL AS IT GETS*. This record, the sound, the production, and the quality is just a handful better.

SKRATCH: What was the hardest song to record?

SAL: Hardest one? Hmmm. It's pretty funny, but the hardest one was "Forgotten." There was this one line in the song [for which] I just couldn't get the timing—and it's real simple. "It's just a better way—that's all I had to say, and I kept fucking it up, I couldn't find the timing, I didn't. I don't know what the hell was the matter with me. I must have had a brain drain or something, but I had to do it about a hundred times before I got it right.

SKRATCH: Do you prefer gigging or recording, and why?

SAL: Ah, gigging. It's so much better to be on the road, just playing shows in front of hundreds of hundreds of people. That's what

I live for. There's nothing else I'd rather do. Recording is cool, but I don't like to be cooped up in the studio for too long. I'd rather be out on the road. That's my high, being on the stage for like 40 minutes.

SKRATCH: How would you describe Sworn Enemy to someone who has never heard of you before?

SAL: I would say it's not for the weak at heart. It's very brutal, hard, heavy, up-tempo—and something that is an acquired taste, that's for sure. Thrashy, it's got the very mooshy parts. I guess that is the best way I can describe it. Those are the best adjectives I can think of, anyway.

SKRATCH: What bands are you currently listening to? Are there any bands that we'd be surprised by? Any bands you'd be embarrassed to...

SAL: Well, I mean, we've been...we've been kind of rocking out to some Slid Row and Powder! lately. You know, it's a nice change to listen to that and not hear the [imitates chugging guitars] all day. We listen to Anthrax and God Forbid and Mantra's every night, and sometimes it's nice to listen to something a little mellow. We've been listening to a lot

That's what I live for. There's nothing else I'd rather do.

of...What is that soundtrack? '80s BALLADS? HAIR METAL BALLADS?

SKRATCH: MONSTER BALLADS?

SAL: Right, yeah—that's what we've been listening to. So, it's nice, it's different...you know, it's mellow. If we want to listen to something to drive to, let's listen to something mellow to chill our ears.

SKRATCH: Have you ever thought of doing a Sworn Enemy cover version of an '80s metal tune?

SAL: We're joking about that this morning; we were saying, "Yo, let's do Twisted Sister's 'We're Not Going to Take It.' Oh, it so totally would fuck. I was feeling it—but I don't think

anyone else was

SKRATCH: What band has been the biggest influence on you, and why?

SAL: For me, personally, I'd have to say it's been Biohazard, for the simple fact that when I first bought their record, the lyrics just hit home with me. They are real; they don't talk about any of these bullshit fantasies going on. Everything they deal with you can relate to in some way, shape, or form—and that is why the way I write. I always wanted to write like how they did it, so that people would feel the same way like I felt towards their lyrics. I want people to feel that towards my lyrics.

SKRATCH: What is the best thing about being a New York band?

SAL: You get notoriety from being from New York. New York has always been a mecca of the world; it's like the centerpiece. Everyone knows New York. When they toured, everyone knew New York hardcore because Agnostic Front put New York hardcore on the map. They opened the eyes of the world to New York hardcore, and it remained like that. It's always been a stigma in a good way. If you are from New York, it seems like you always have people wanting to know about

you, people wanting to come and see you. And hey, I love it. It's great—I'm not going to front.

SKRATCH: How do you guys spice things up on tour and keep the morale going?

SAL: We like to joke around a lot, we like to pull a lot of pranks. We are a very comical bunch in this RV, so there's a lot of joking around going on.

SKRATCH: What was the last prank you pulled?

SAL: Um, we were just in Europe with Madball not too long ago, and it's Ed's [i.e., the bassist] first tour, and he got to go on a bus, didn't have to do shit, got treated like a

rock star—so we felt that he needed to get a little Ashton Kutcher-type punk. So, he got, really wasted this one night, and as he is climbing up the stairs to his bunk to go to bed, and he barge into Freddy Madball, and Freddy is like, "Oh, hey, Ed, what's up? Watch it," you know? And Ed was so wasted, he was like, "Ahhh, whatever," and he went to bed. So the next day we were like, "Yo, we are going to get him. The gig was sold out, and we had our passports down on the table, so we made like we were talking to our manager, telling him that we were thrown off the tour, making him feel like it was all his fault, that we had all the posters at the club saying Sworn Enemy cancelled, blah blah blah, this and that. You know, this dude was almost in tears, I swear to God. And then we were like, "Yo, you've just been punk'd." That was the best one we've had so far.

SKRATCH: That's crazy. It's kind of merciless, but it's funny, anyway.

SAL: Yeah, it is, it is merciless, but it had to be done.

SKRATCH: What advice would you give to an aspiring musician?

SAL: Wow. Don't quit your day job. Go to school, go to college, get your education. But, if someone has the desire and the heart to want to play, I say, you know, give 150%, because if you aren't going to give 150%, don't do it, because it's going to take every ounce of energy that you have to try to make it in this industry.

SKRATCH: What's the best advice you ever got?

SAL: The best advice I ever got...I've gotten so much advice. You know what? I think the best advice I ever got was just: stay true to your roots, don't forget where you came from.

SKRATCH: Do you have any final words for us, Sal?

SAL: On January 24th, help us out and go pick up *THE BEGINNING OF THE END*.

Th' Legendary Shack*Shakers
By Denise Blaz

Th' Legendary Shack*Shakers are an all-American blues, Delta-based band out of Nashville who have some pretty cool fans. At last year's SXSW music festival, they got to play alongside Robert Plant, who, after seeing them play once, was so impressed that he invited them out on tour with him. If that's not impressive enough for you, Jello Biafra (ex-Dead Kennedys frontman) and Jim Heath (a.k.a. the Reverend Horton Heat) are also huge fans.

SKRATCH: You guys are from Nashville. What are some of your favorite things to do there?
WILKES: There's a lot of cool stuff. The honkytonks downtown are really cool. It's like time stands still down there. It's like the old West, in a way. There's also these old jamboree places where old-timers go and have a pickin' party. There's a lot of cool country music and old-school traditional music. There's a lot of great art happening here, with a lot of good, young talent. I think it's a really great American town.

SKRATCH: What do you think about his spoken-word stuff?

WILKES: I really haven't followed his career. [...] I didn't come out of the punk-rock scene; I came out of blues scene—so I'm learning as I go. The first that I ever heard of him was when I saw him live last year. We were born out of this biker bar, blues circuit. It's kind of embarrassing, but it's totally devoid of irony.

SKRATCH: Yeah, I get that.

WILKES: As we go and as I'm educating myself in punk rock, it's now influencing [...] my life. The music that really moves me, though, is the Delta blues and the Appalachian music and stuff that's kind of running from something. It's like the guy with a banjo in a room, and you just imagine the single light bulb coming out of the ceiling.

SKRATCH: Can you tell me a random fact about yourself?

WILKES: I am a Kentucky Colonel. I am an ordained honorary Kentucky Colonel. It's like an organization of Southern gen-

WILKES: I'm trying to remember. I think it was in school and it was actually exhilarating. I've never been nervous onstage. I've felt nervous energy beforehand, but never a fear or anxiety or anything like that.

SKRATCH: Jello and Jim Heath contribute their time on this CD. Were there any fun stories while recording?

WILKES: The only thing I can really say about that was when the Reverend Horton Heat came in to play guitar, he came in these sweatpants and an old cap. We were thinking that he'll knock it out, but to his endless credit he stayed with us and made sure that we got the take that we wanted. We were totally honored that he would do that. He's a really great guy. Jello did take after take after take. He went above and beyond what we were asking for, too. It just shows that they're really big fans of this band—and I just can't believe it.

TH' LEGENDARY SHACK*SHAKERS

"I prefer Prego, but I can't afford it."

lemen that the governor has recognized for some sort of achievement. It's kind of like one of my weird claims to fame. And I also like spaghetti. I like Ragu and Prego. (I prefer Prego, but I can't afford it.)

SKRATCH: What do you think is your greatest accomplishment?

WILKES: Just to have taken a passion of mine and turn it into a business that pays that bills. I'm not looking for fame and fortune; I just want to make a living doing what I love.

SKRATCH: I have to start a media blackout for one of my classes later today. Do you think you would be able to go without any form of media for two days?

WILKES: Yeah, I think I already kind of do that. I

don't watch television much. [...]

SKRATCH: That says so much about them as musicians.

WILKES: And as people, too. They wanted to do it, and when they were in the studio, they gave us everything they had. I look back on when I first saw the Rev, and there's no way that I would have ever dreamed that he would be playing on my record. So, there you go: there's another one of those achievements that, if I took time to think about it, would freak me out.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the other guys in the band.

WILKES: Mark watches the books and drives that van. He's the diplomat. Our guitar player is the good-looking one. He's covered in tattoos, and he's very much a lady-killer. He's [...] puts on a show like I do. Mark does, too. He's a hard-worker in the band. He's the guy who while we're sleeping in the hotel will go out at 8 in the morning and get the oil changed. He's always looking out for all the details. You think he would be exhausted, but when he comes out onstage, that's when he really comes alive. We're still getting to know Brad. He's a speed-metal drummer playing this crazy bluegrass/rockabilly music. The main guys, Mark and David, are my buddies; they're my best friends in the world. I just have good, solid people all around me. I appreciate them.

SKRATCH: What's the last song that was stuck in your head?

WILKES: "Big Spender". My girlfriend is in this burlesque act. I don't know if I should tell that whole story, but there was this girl singing "Big Spender", and she went for this note that was beyond her reach. The last note was so out of key and awful that it inspired this running gag that wouldn't die, to the point where it was stuck in our heads for months. Also, the song "All of Me" literally haunted me for like two to three months. It was like the hiccup for three months; it would not wean my mind. I was really going crazy. I think Sinatra did that song. It was a real problem. For a while I thought it was God telling me that we should do this song. But it all worked out.

PANDELIRIUM: Th' Legendary Shack*Shakers' third studio album is out now. Information can be found on their Website, at www.cockadoodledont.com.



SKRATCH: You yourself do some artwork. How long have you been doing that?

WILKES: I've been drawing since I was two years old. I went to college though at Murray State University in Western Kentucky. About six years ago, I started painting sideshow banners, freakshow banners in that kind of old-school circus style for sideshow performers and bands.

SKRATCH: Did you do the cover art?

WILKES: Yes. I've done the last three of them.

SKRATCH: Jello Biafra has described you as being the last great rock 'n' roll frontman. Who do you think him as a frontman?

WILKES: Jello is an awesome frontman. I saw him with The Melvins last Halloween, and that was amazing.

SKRATCH: What makes you nervous?

WILKES: Talking to people on the phone.

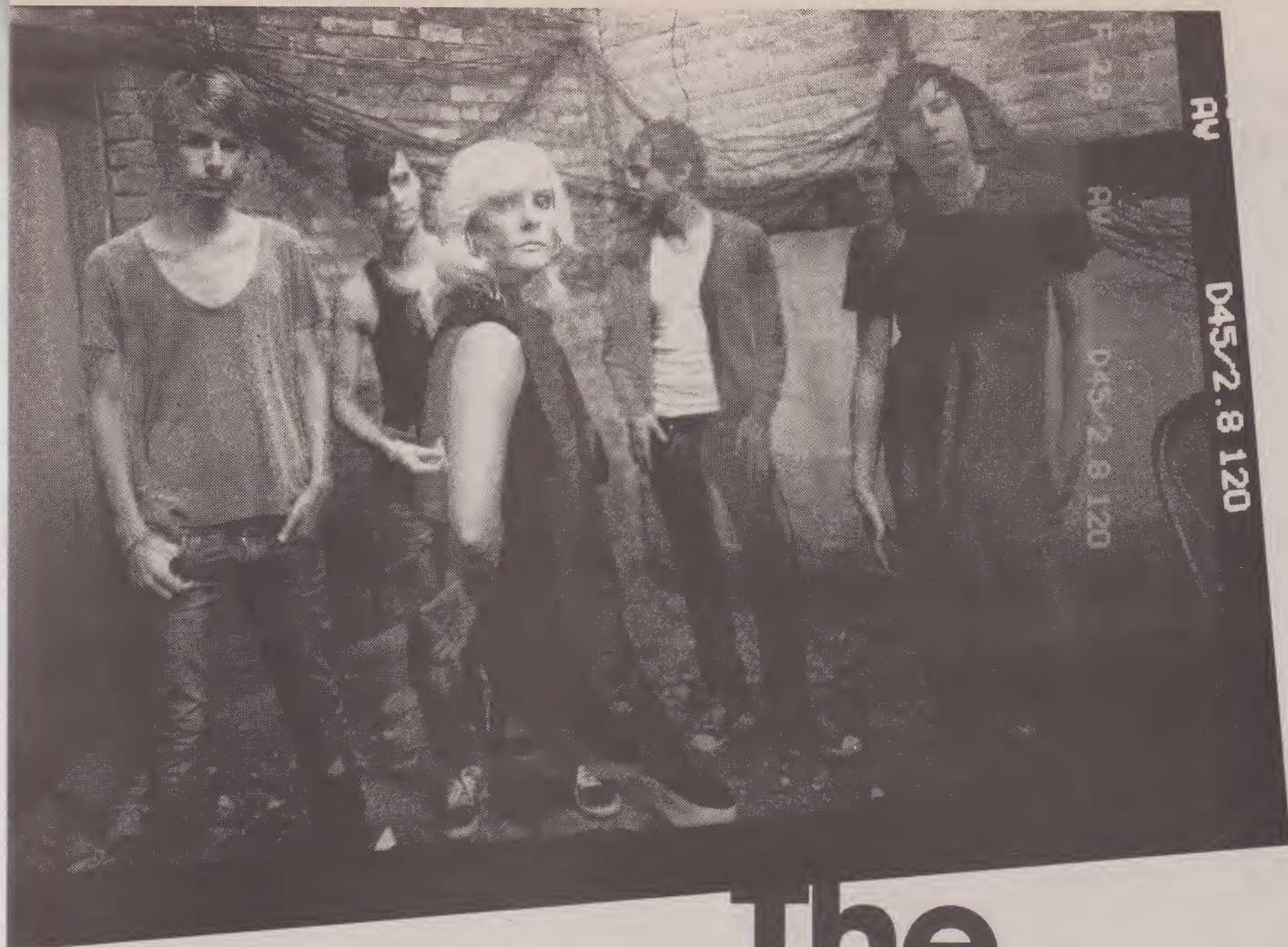
SKRATCH: Really. Why?

WILKES: Yeah, because I rely on a lot of facial expressions.

SKRATCH: I would much rather do interviews in person.

WILKES: Yeah, I'm sure it's hard to take that and then write it out. "Then J.D. raised his eyebrow." You don't know what the implications are, the facial expressions and gestures. It's hard for me to talk on the phone. I'm a socially phobic guy, anyway. That's why I feel better onstage. Onstage you can get away with anything—but only because you're under the lights and things are amplified, so any little twitch becomes this huge gesture.

SKRATCH: What was the first time onstage for you like?



The Sounds
Interview by Melissa Wong

It's a given that around finals week, the anxiety and work from an entire semester will finally amount to something. Whether it's completing a long-term project or just making the grade, at least at the end you can breathe in a huge sigh of relief. For me, it was a cumulative 3.6 GPA. For young Swedish band The Sounds, putting together a kick-ass sophomore album was the challenge.

Hailing from the small town of Helsingborg, The Sounds (Maja Ivarsson on vocals, Jesper Anderberg on keyboards, Johan Bengtsson on bass, Fredrik Nilsson on drums, and Felix Rodriguez on guitar) are known for hit songs such as "Living in America" and "Seven Days a Week" from their 2002 debut release. Four years later, the band is back and ready to rock the dance floor, as DYING TO SAY THIS TO YOU, their highly-anticipated sophomore release, is due out on March 21 on New Line Records. The band completed a tour with Stellastarr and Shiny Toy Guns last month, and they are currently booked for shows in Sweden until late February.

While home in late December, Anderberg took some time out to speak with me. We ranted about our love/hate relationship with America and his European beers of choice.

SKRATCH: In past interviews, you guys have always mentioned your love and hate for America. What is it about America that makes people love it so much?

ANDERBERG: I think that there are so many people to meet and cities to go to. The people are very open and social. In America, I can walk into a bar alone and people will start talking to me like I'm not a stranger. You can't do that here in Sweden; people would just look at you weird.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] What about reasons to hate America?

ANDERBERG: I think the feeling of America as one country is weird. It's like it isn't one country, because it's not united. Politically, it keeps making mistakes and still thinks that it has the right to do so.

SKRATCH: True, true. Having toured various parts of the world, what are some of your favorite North American cities to play?

ANDERBERG: Almost all of them-but especially El Paso, Lawrence (KS), Las Vegas, Orlando (FL), and Toronto.

SKRATCH: Do these crowds differ a lot from those back home?

ANDERBERG: Yes, a lot! You have a whole different live culture there than what we have. It's hard to get people to go out and watch a concert in Sweden. I'm not

The Sounds

"I'm not saying that Swedes don't like live music, but sometimes I think we're a little bit lazy."

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sure they even go to see their favorite bands. I'm not saying that Swedes don't like live music, but sometimes I think we're a little bit lazy.

SKRATCH: Tell me about your new album, *DYING TO SAY THIS TO YOU*.

ANDERBERG: Well, early in January 2005, we took some songs to the U.S. to meet with the producers. It was weird, because we're sitting there kind of faking it with like four songs. I mean, when we are in the studio, we have tons of tracks to choose from that we work on, but for the album, it was hard to pick which ones we wanted. So straight from the airport, we wrote the rest. We got so fucking sick for two weeks. After that, we were like, "No more songs." We ended up writing "Ego" the week before we left to record.

SKRATCH: What was it like working with Jeff Saltzman?

ANDERBERG: Overall, it was an interesting learning period for all of us. We didn't have a lot of experience in studios, but after this we sure do. Jeff was very generous with studio time. And since a lot of the songs were still in the development stage, we needed all the time we could get; and the time we received we are grateful for.

SKRATCH: On this album, you ended up writing the majority of the album in the studio and went straight to recording in the summer. I bet the pressure was really on.

ANDERBERG: Oh yeah. We didn't have much time to think things through; you had to start writing immediately. But I like that. Lots of pressure, plus a short amount of

time. But in the end, we got results we liked.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Yeah, that's sort of like the 10-page research paper I'm finishing up. I think a lot of last-minute things end up being 10 times better because of all that pressure.

ANDERBERG: [Laughs] Yeah, totally. Actually, "Don't Want to Hurt You" was a late-night experiment recorded on my computer. It was recorded almost like a demo, which is cool.

SKRATCH: So now that the pressure is off, you guys are back to the normal studio routine. What is a typical day like for The Sounds?

ANDERBERG: Coffee, studio, coffee, studio, coffee, studio, meet up with friends, beer, studio, beer, studio, beer, and casino or home to your girlfriend-in that exact order!

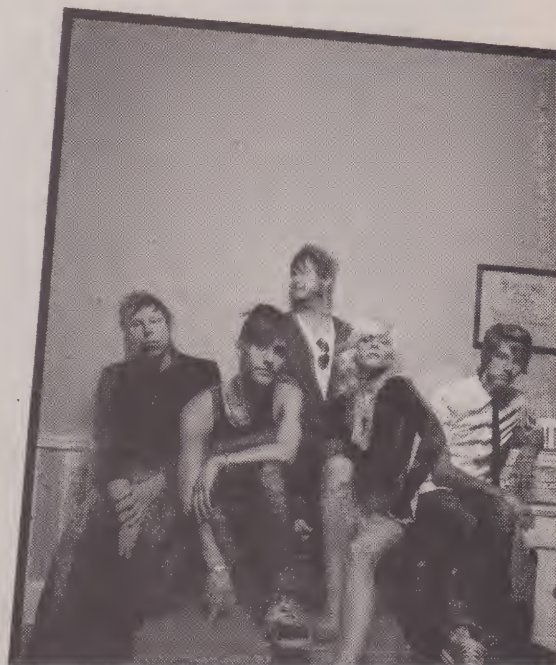
SKRATCH: [Laughs] Sounds pretty tough. In interviews you all mention your fondness for beer. Me, too! Is drinking something Swedes grow up with at a young age, or do you guys just love beer?

ANDERBERG: [Laughs] Yeah, we like to drink. But I would rather drink with my buddies than go partying my ass off until early in the morning. Going to the pub with a friend is the best. I'm not a big fan of Swedish beer, but there are a lot of great European ones, like Urquell and Hoegaarden. I suppose you could say that we start drinking earlier than people in the U.S. do. But we do that instead of smoking pot, so I guess we are even?

[Laughs] I think we started drinking early

because we live 20 minutes from Denmark and they don't have an age limit for buying alcohol. So we often went there to drink. But I try to stay away from vodka-at least, that's my New Year's promise.

Sweet! I should work on those New Year's resolutions, too. For more info on the band and tour dates, check out www.the-sounds.com or hit them up on Myspace at www.myspace.com/thesounds. To check out the band's first single from the new album, "Song with a Mission", visit www.mtve.com.



Scarlet
By Janelle Jones

The release of **THIS WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO FALL APART** (Ferret) heralds the triumphant return (hopefully) of ambitious, electronic-tinged hardcore outfit Scarlet. The record offers up some nice treats, as the band sound huger than ever, having crafted songs even grander in scope than on their fine **CULT CLASSIC**. It also showcases new vocalist/lyricist Brandon Roundtree.

While on tour in January, longtime guitarist Randy Vanderbilt discussed the struggles of getting back into the swing of things touring-wise, as the band had broken up for a spell and so hadn't been out for one-and-a-half years (except a two-week tour with The Agony Scene last November). Luckily, they were finding themselves adapting to the conditions. "We're kinda getting our groove back," confirmed Randy, "slowly."

SKRATCH: I guess you get asked this a lot, but on that Agony Scene tour, something happened. Someone had a stroke?

RANDY: Our bass player at the time had a mini-seizure, I guess. A blood vessel in his brain popped. He just started convulsing after one of our shows, and we had to take him to the hospital [...] for emergency brain surgery. It was pretty crazy. Obviously we were there for a couple days in Bakersfield waiting to see if he was okay. Once we found out he was okay, he told us to finish the tour without him—so we finished it without a bass player.

SKRATCH: Did that kinda change your views about the band or life at all, that one minute it could all be gone? I mean, that's freakin' scary.

RANDY: Yeah, we definitely all felt like that, especially considering he was only 19 years old when that happened. He's the youngest one. He's actually the one person that was touring with us that was completely drug-free, didn't do anything and has a stroke. Definitely scares you.

SKRATCH: About the new record, this one sounds a lot huger and more epic than **CULT CLASSIC**.

RANDY: Yeah. That's kinda what we were going for with **CULT CLASSIC**, too. We wanted it to be really layered, a lot of electronics and stuff like that. Our drummer (Andreas) actually owns the studio we record in, so there was a lot of stuff we tried to do that didn't even come across exactly how we wanted it to. Since his studio's upgraded and we've gotten a lot better with working in the studio, we're able to pull off a lot more stuff now. In a way, I kinda feel that the new record is what we wanted to get out of **CULT CLASSIC** but couldn't achieve that at that point in time.

SKRATCH: In "On Fire", once the pianos come in, the whole feel gets so powerful. I guess that's what I mean by "epic." A lot of the songs just have this power....

RANDY: Yeah, I can understand that. On a lot of our records we always wanted to do piano and stuff like that in there, like, more layers. I think when I was writing a lot of the stuff for this record, I wanted everything to sound a little more musical. A lot of stuff on the last record actually doesn't make a whole lot of sense musically, I think. With the new record I tried to stick a little bit more of a formula, with chord progressions and stuff like that that makes it a whole lot more musical.

SKRATCH: Have you always used electronics? I haven't heard the first two EPs you put out.

RANDY: The first EP we put out on Ferret has a little bit of electronics on it. The EP before that was a long time ago, on Tribunal. We actually sounded a whole lot different then. That was written when we were all in high school.

SKRATCH: [...] Was it hard finding the right guy [to take over vocals]?

RANDY: Actually, it was easier than we ever could've imagined. Since Andreas owns the studio, he recorded a band that Brandon used to be in, Forever and a Day. We got back together to record [this] record, and Jon [Spencer, previous vocalist] was originally gonna do it, but then a week into recording Jon decided, "Hey, I don't think I can do it." The day he told us, we knew right away that we were gonna ask Brandon, 'cause we thought he'd be perfect for it. We asked him, he laid down a song with us, and that was that. We were like, "Heck yeah—we're doing it."

SKRATCH: Who's playing bass?

RANDY: Right now we have a fill-in bass player. His name is Eli. He plays in a band called Society's Finest. He's filling in for this tour and maybe the next tour we go on, which is March through April, the Ferret Music Tour (we might be doing that). But [...] we need to find another bass player. [Laughs] It's kinda weird not having a permanent bass player and every time we go on tour having to get somebody new; but it's working out so far. Everybody we get to fill in we like, so that makes it easier.



SKRATCH: You were talking about the recording studio. It must be nice to basically get to take your time with everything, since Andreas owns it.

RANDY: Yeah, we get to take our time. We pretty much wrote and recorded the whole record together. We wrote it while we were recording it and spent about a month, month-and-a-half in the studio. We actually did it song by song, which made it a lot easier, because we had everything set up—all the drums, our guitars, the vocal mics—and we just started on a song and didn't stop until that song was done, and then moved on to the next song. Most bands end up writing the whole record before they go into the studio and then have to record all the drums for the entire record, all the bass, do it like that. I just like writing in the studio. It's a lot easier for us. It makes us concentrate on the songs more because we're writing it as we record it and then we can

just say, "Hey, we don't like that" and we can just take it out and go back and redo it. A nice little crap filter, I call it.

A nice little crap filter, I call it.

SKRATCH: "Crap filter"? [Laughter] Okay. What about lyrically: Is that all Brandon?

RANDY: Yeah. I couldn't really tell you what he's thinking. [Laughter] I definitely like his style of vocals; definitely a little deeper than Jon's. Jon's vocals were a little darker and just kinda mysterious—which was nice; but I think Brandon's a little deeper and straight to the point.

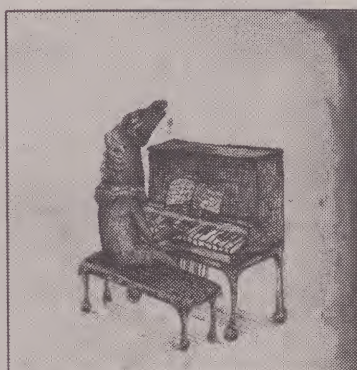
SKRATCH: On *CULT CLASSIC*, it seemed that the songs were, like, either full clean vocals... whereas with the new album...

RANDY: Yeah, that's one thing we always wanted to do: electronic, weird-sounding stuff [with] the crazy metal stuff [...] Back then we didn't really know a good way to combine them that well. I think that's what's moving our sound forward: more combining everything together [...] in a way that we can pull it off. With the new record, we felt everything intertwined a lot better. There are a lot more different kinds of parts in different songs, and just trying to figure out how we could get each part to flow into the next and sound like it's meant to be there. I agree: some of the songs on *CULT CLASSIC* were just kinda outta nowhere, like, Okay, this doesn't make sense.

Since returning from their hiatus, Scarlet are definitely looking to get back on people's radar, with hopes of being on tour through the summer. www.ferretstyle.com.



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SMALL ARMS DEALER

SMALL ARMS DEALER
By Brandon Russell

Long Island, NY's Small Arms Dealer have committed mutiny on the punk-rock pirate ship and have set sail for the gates of hell. Riding on the homicidal, suicidal wave of Lucifer, these sociopaths will stop at nothing until they have restored disorder to the state of the punk nation. On their new album from Deep Elm, A SINGLE UNIFYING THEORY, these boys have put together 12 hard-rock gems that are, surprisingly, very upbeat and catchy. Fans of Smoke or Fire or Avail will dig these guys, but so will fans of Social Distortion and Good Riddance. Put no stock into the fact that this is their first

full-length, because the members of Small Arms Dealer have collectively spent more time in bands (such as The Might of Princes, Contra, Explosivo!) than many of today's most-respected punk outfits. This rapid-fire, tempo-changing assault isn't for the weak at heart, but punk-rockers made ill by the recent pop takeover will rejoice over this record, which promises to take punk back to the decidedly darker days of yesteryear.

Lubrano (singer) and Beaker (guitarist/back-up singer) tag-teamed a recent e-mail interview for SKRATCH and showed readers that their obsession with the morbid comes from somewhere closer to purgatory than to the depths of hell.

SKRATCH: First of all, let's get things straight. The band's name leaves a lot up to interpretation. Does it refer to one who sells pocket-sized pistols, or might it imply that Small Arms Dealer has engaged in the highly profitable, yet slightly obscure industry of midget prosthetics?

LUBRANO: Actually, it refers to one who sells pistols to one-armed midgets. BEAKER: I sometimes do picture a guy in a brown trench coat who saunters up to you and opens one side of the coat to reveal doll arms hanging in rows. A standard-proportioned man with tiny little arms dealing cards to dogs at a poker table almost made it into the layout of our demo.

SKRATCH: But really, where did the name come from?

LUBRANO: It doesn't really mean anything, but I do like the visual image I get of someone opening the trunk of a car that's filled with guns.

SKRATCH: A description of the band on the Deep Elm Website says that Small Arms Dealer "plays with the frenzied desperation of a band with one foot in the grave, and blows the fucking lid off the proverbial rock n' roll [sic] coffin." That's quite the claim. What could Small Arms Dealer possibly do to live up to these types of expectations?

LUBRANO: I was going to have Louie (the guitarist) and Beaker strap

bayonets to the ends of their guitars. Also. I will continue to vomit into my own mouth every time we play a show. BEAKER: A certain band member has been known to suffer severe lung collapses in the middle of playing live, at which point said band member is forced to finish the rest of the show and then drive himself to the hospital. It is called spontaneous pneumothorax. True story.

SKRATCH: Lyrically, the entire album is so morbid. Suicide and homicide seem to be themes from beginning to end. In the very most straightforward sense, it seems like you guys have really come to terms with your own mortality. Have there been some life experiences that drive these kinds of emotions?

LUBRANO: For me, a major factor was my dad's death when I was 21. As dark as everything sounds, we try to put a positive cap on it. It's not so much about the morbid feelings as it is about overcoming them. At least for me. I've come to terms with my own mortality and I'm not afraid of death. It's just a part of life.

SKRATCH: In songs like "Scumbagsville, CT", Small Arms Dealer's acceptance of their place in hell seems to be so simple. This reliance on the reality of hell implies to me that SAD does believe in some sort of heaven and hell. Is there religion in your lives, or is hell merely a metaphor for the dark themes that are present throughout the album.

punk metal indie



hardcore, psychobilly

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DESIGNED BY: JAMES GEIGER 

CONTACT AT: QUEENISDEAD@GMAIL



BEAKER: Each of us has our own views on religion, but for the most part none of us are very religious. to say the least. Lubrano is apt to use "fuck God" as a formal greeting. The religious themes serve as good metaphors for the good and the bad junk that people go through in everyday life—mostly the bad shit. On a positive note, if you've never been to hell, then you can't really appreciate the feeling of crawling your way back out. You'll never have the perspective to see that mundane, everyday bullshit isn't the worst thing that could happen.

SKRATCH: How have fans old and new responded to the new record?

LUBRANO: So far it's been good. No one's tried to stab us or anything.

BEAKER: The decent record reviews are a pleasant surprise. I think we were all half-expecting to get ripped apart for not wearing tight-enough pants in the record layout.

SKRATCH: From the first song to the last, the album jumps all over the place in tempo. Some songs are hard-hitting and straightforward, while others are upbeat and even a little poppy. Is this a reflection of past outfits everyone played in before joining Small Arms Dealer?

BEAKER: Our diverse interests and backgrounds definitely play a part in the relative diversity in Small Arms Dealer songs. Between the five of us, we have been in (or are still in) the following types of bands: pop/rock,

"WE ARE A NICE MESS"

screamy-emo, shouty hardcore, somber flamenco-indie, pop-punk, melodic emo, folk-acoustic-punk, drunken acoustic balladry, horror-rap, etc. And those are just the ones I can think of off the top of my head. So yeah, we are a nice mess.

SKRATCH: Fill in the blank: "A fan of _____ and _____ wouldn't think twice about buying the new Small Arms Dealer record."

LUBRANO: Rock and roll.

BEAKER: Mario and Luigi.

SKRATCH: Lou, the guitar player, recently came to SAD from another Long Island band, On the Might of Princes. How did that transfer come about?

LUBRANO: On the Might of Princes had broken up after their European tour. We needed another guitar player.

BEAKER: Lou is one of the best I know, so it was a no-brainer to ask him to join us.

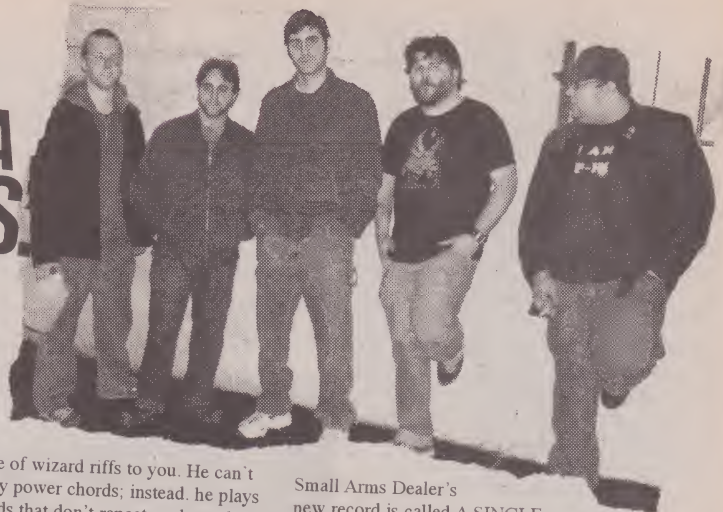
BEAKER: Lou is awesome, because he refuses to play anything regular on guitar. You present him with a boring-ass song, and he returns a gleaming

pile of wizard riffs to you. He can't play power chords; instead, he plays leads that don't repeat, so he makes the band sound a lot more interesting than we actually are. In between songs at practice, he plays stuff that sounds like Angus Young being stabbed in the neck with a flying V.

SKRATCH: If Small Arms Dealer could tour with any active band of any genre, who would it be? Why?

LUBRANO: My pick would be Dillinger Four. I fucking love that band. They are so good that it makes me feel like shit.

BEAKER: My vote would be to play with Yanni at the Acropolis. I'm not trying to be an asshole. It would be epic.



Small Arms Dealer's new record is called A SINGLE UNIFYING THEORY, it's on Deep Elm Records, and it's a hard-rock masterpiece! It's available from their Website, www.smallarmsdealer.net, and at record stores around the country. Check their Website or their Myspace site, www.myspace.com/smallarmsdealer, for upcoming shows, releases, and any other information about the band.

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ARCHITECTS
By Marcia Taylor

Kansas City quartet Architects (vocalist/guitarist Brandon Phillips, Zach Phillips on bass, Adam Phillips on drums, and Mike Alexander on lead guitar) are set to release their second disc, *REVENGE*, on Anodyne Records this month. The group spent 10 years as The Gadgets but chose to change the band name to reflect the change in musical styles that evolved over the years. The music on *REVENGE* is a highly energetic blend of punk, rock 'n' roll, and rhythm and blues (even with a little bit of blues harmonica thrown in). It's a record that is guaranteed to have you listening to it as the first step to having a great day.

Phillips spoke with me about *REVENGE*, the Kansas City music scene, and rock 'n' roll in general.

PHILLIPS: Oh, we got that for SO long! By the time we signed with Hellkat, he was 13 or 14. We were called "the Hansen of ska." It felt like a total gut punch when I heard that. Of course we could never forget it.

SKRATCH: So if your brothers and you had a band at such young ages, were your parents professional musicians or in the business?

PHILLIPS: I'm closer to the Count of Monte Cristo or the Man in the Iron Mask. I tend to blow things out of proportion that I feel violate my sense of propriety and dignity. Having people misunderstand what I do seems to be my thing. It's my favorite literary theme.

SKRATCH: So then is writing the songs cathartic for you?

PHILLIPS: Yeah. Actually, NOT writing them, but hearing a song back as



Architects

SKRATCH: I've interviewed a lot of bands from Kansas City in the past few years (e.g., Reggie and the Full Effect, The Get Up Kids). And Orange County's own Bullets and Octane have a couple of members from K.C., too. It seems to be a good place for music.

PHILLIPS: There has always been a super healthy scene, but no one ever got out until now. The old bass player for Louis XIV is from Kansas City. In fact, the world is just a great big field where people from Kansas City are tossed; you can always find someone from there wherever you are.

SKRATCH: Your first band, The Gadgets, had a 10-year run, and you decided to start anew?

PHILLIPS: Yes. We did a good, long spell as The Gadgets. It was great, but we finally had enough line-up changes and stylistic shifts. When we started the band, my brother [Adam] was nine years old! We'd moved the musical paradigm quite a bit. We wanted to start with a clean slate and without annoying the critics by playing different music under the same name.

SKRATCH: Your brother was only nine? Wow, you guys were kind of like the Hansen of Kansas City!

PHILLIPS: Yeah, my whole family is rife with artists, performers, weirdos, and mavericks. It was very fertile ground.

SKRATCH: Did you start out playing talent shows and things like that?

PHILLIPS: I think some of the earliest gigs were an elementary-school carnival and my middle-school carnival (where they pulled the plug on us almost immediately because of the middle-school mosh pit).

SKRATCH: The title of the record is *REVENGE*, and the press release talks a little about your fondness for that subject. Care to comment on that?

PHILLIPS: I have a problem with holding a grudge. It's hard to discuss without being melodramatic. My imagination is preoccupied with violent fantasies of revenge. It's an easy place for me to be constructive from. Some are good at being the jilted lover.

SKRATCH: Are you the victim or the person who takes it upon himself to make things right?

you're singing it. I feel like, "Yeah, I've got this right." I like rock 'n' roll that is a little defiant. You get that fitful teenage brat thing, like Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran or Little Richard! It's the easiest part of Little Richard to imitate: the bratty part, the attitude. He's a badass. I don't want to sound retro, but I would pay \$1,000 to play guitar in The Upsetters [Little Richard's back-up band]. When Little Richard was still back on the chitlin' circuit, way back in the early days, I noticed that his drummer was named Pat E. Cake. They all had these names that were vaguely silly but rebellious, like the early L.A. punk-band guys like Darby Crash. And that was 40 years before punk rock!

SKRATCH: What are some of Architects' musical influences?

PHILLIPS: All the sudden everyone is into them, but I'd have to say AC/DC and The Who. Queen would come in third place.

SKRATCH: I can definitely hear AC/DC and The Who in your music, but I'm having trouble getting the Queen connection.

PHILLIPS: The Queen thing is more about the songs I could never possibly write. Okay, if Springsteen was Samuel Beckett, then Queen would be Leonard Bernstein (the guy who wrote WEST SIDE STORY). Both trade in drama and tension, but with Queen, it's not about the riffs, they created drama in their songs.

SKRATCH: I feel like I hear a lot of Stones' influence in your music, too, especially in the rhythm and blues and heart that you bring to the songs. PHILLIPS: We're more Stones than Kinks or Beatles. I tend to be a big Jam fan, because they are very Motown-influenced. And our last Gadgets CD was a complete garage rhythm and blues/gospel rave-up. That music is completely priceless to me. We had a lot of fun concealing that we were a punk band that ripped off a lick from Sam and Dave.

SKRATCH: Tell me about The Who influences.

PHILLIPS: I like that they are so brash and self-indulgent (not self-indulgent like Led Zeppelin, that lumbering solo kind of way). When The Who made rock operas, they were indulgent in the "every show going up in flames" way. They were the first band to put guitar feedback chaos on record. Their material itself has an awesome energy. I want to see or play a show where the band unleashes sweat, blood, and decibels on an unsuspecting audience.

SKRATCH: What about AC/DC?

PHILLIPS: I'm a really harsh critic of lyrics that are dumb, but AC/DC plays rock 'n' roll like it SHOULD be played. They'll never slip in a ballad on you. I've seen them twice, and both shows were the greatest. The worst AC/DC record is still really good. And as a guitar player, when you first learn to play the riff from "You Shook Me All Night Long", it boggles your mind. They have a certain kind of swagger. If AC/DC comes on the radio, your pool game WILL improve!

SKRATCH: Are you happy on the Anodyne label?

PHILLIPS: Yes! Anodyne has been cool enough to let us A&R the record. We know what NOT to do from our past experiences on a big label, what works and what doesn't.

SKRATCH: What are you guys doing to support the disc?

PHILLIPS: We're just starting to hit the road with it; we have a couple of small tours planned. I grew up touring, and my personality is partly based on growing up in a van. I'm homesick for being on the road, so I hope we can get out on the road until we're spent and ready to go back home.

I like REVENGE so much that I am going to the show in Pomona this weekend, and I know it will be great! You can also check out the band by going to www.anodynerecords.com, www.nyspace.com/architectskino, and www.purevolume.com/architects.

"I want to see or play a show where the band unleashes sweat, blood, and decibels on an unsuspecting audience."

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The Lashes
By Keight Beaven

Coming from a city that built its credibility on grunge, Seattle six-piece The Lashes are proving that times have changed. Stating they are simply "a rock 'n' roll band that writes pop songs," The Lashes' straightforward approach must have worked: after being on an independent label for only their EP, they have signed to a major label. However, not everything has come so quickly for the band. Cycling through numerous members—including 11 different drummers!—The Lashes finally found their perfect lineup: Ben Clark—lead vocals, Scotty Flickard and Eric Howk—guitar, Nate Mooter—bass and vocals, Jacob Hoffman—keyboard and vocals, and Mike Loggins—drums. The Lashes rarely settle on anything, know exactly what they want, make no excuses, and take pride in everything they do.

I had the chance to speak with Ben about their growing momentum and their upcoming full-length album (to be released on Columbia Records). GET IT!

SKRATCH: How and why do you think your sound has progressed from the EP to the your upcoming full-length?

BEN: When we did the EP, it was like [...] all of it was brand new. [Since then,] we've grown as a band and gotten better together. This was the chance for us to really make THE album that we wanted to make.

SKRATCH: How would you like your band to be described?

BEN: There are a thousand different ways to describe our music. We see people writing about how we are a mix of new bands and old bands. Our only goal has been to take all the things we love about rock 'n' roll and write our own songs that are something new and old and something blue and borrowed like on a wedding day or whatever. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: I noticed that you were on Lookout! Records, a smaller label, and now you are signed to and will release GET IT! through Columbia. What are some positive and negative things that your band has personally experienced in working with both types of labels (aside from the difference in the size of their pocketbooks)?

BEN: Everything that happened at Lookout! was totally great, but when you are on a label like Lookout!, it's harder to be heard because not as many people are hearing it, getting it, reviewing it. GET IT! was supposed to come out on Lookout!, but [...] If someone hears our record and believes in it and wants to give it better distribution, then good! It doesn't matter what label you put a record out on, as long as it's a good record. We are lucky to be on two labels that believe in us and allow us to be a part of their family. I cried when we signed to Lookout!. That was our dream for a long time. That was the biggest deal.

SKRATCH: What is the first single going to be? Is there a particular thing that it's about?

BEN: "Sometimes the Sun" is the single. It's about what a lot of the record is about: girls and make-outs and breakups. It's about a long-distance thing, thinking about a relationship more than actually being in it. We've all had to deal with that, being gone being on tour and all. Every day you are struggling on the phone to keep it normal.

SKRATCH: I've heard that the process of selecting a producer is difficult for bands sometimes, especially for their first full-length. How did your band decide on the producer for GET IT?

BEN: We used the same one for the record as we did on the EP, John Goodmanson. He's one of the first people to record Nirvana. He's done a lot, and for all of it, he's made the records sound like the perfect version of the band. He really got what we were doing. And we wanted to surround ourselves with good people.

SKRATCH: The album hits stores February 21st. Are you pleased with the way it came out?

BEN: We are all really excited about it. We didn't try to do anything flashy or crazy. It still sounds like OUR band like we are live. There are hidden mistakes. Sometimes that ends up the best way to do it, because then it sounds spontaneous. We knew what we wanted to come out with, and we did it and are really proud of it.

SKRATCH: It's a new year. What are your plans to make this one special?

BEN: All we need in 2006 for it to be the best year ever is to have the record out. That's the icing on the cake. We have high hopes for making more records and have a batch of songs ready for a new record.

The Lashes are in the process of organizing a tour to support the release of GET IT!. For more information, please visit www.thelashes.com, www.myspace.com/thelashes, and www.purevolume.com/thelashes.

THE LASHES





Sullivan

Sullivan
By Tim Posada

Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC
Album: HEY, I'M A GHOST (2005)
Band:
Brooks Paschal-guitar, vocals
Zach Harward-bass
Tyson Shipman-guitar
Phil Chamberlain-drums

Emo is dead, but the post-emo scene is very much alive and creating a new wave of music that dares a skeptical audience to categorize it. Sullivan are a prime example of this challenge. As "hardcore" and "pop" are losing meaning in the existential understanding of music, Tooth and Nail Record's Sullivan bring their paradox-the raw energy of emo and the instrumentation of hardcore wrapped in a pop package. A new album and tour has given this band a reason to get up in the morning. And as drummer Phil Chamberlain makes clear, Sullivan are just really excited about where they're going.

SKRATCH: How do you feel about your upcoming album?

PHIL: We're really excited about it. It's a huge step. I've been in a few bands in the past but never recorded a full album. Everybody at Tooth and Nail has been really into it. It's like night and day compared to anything we've done in the past.

SKRATCH: What kind of sound did the band go for?

PHIL: We actually tried to come from a bunch of different directions. Tyson and I were in a hardcore band with my brother (who sings for Underoath now) before Sullivan, so we came from a different background. The other two guys from Sullivan, Brooks and Zach, had been in the band for a few years. It was basically a pop band until Tyson and I joined and brought a different style to it. There are songs on the album that are definitely pop/rock songs; and then there's harder, edgier stuff; and there's a couple acoustic songs. We hit a lot of different stops on the record. I don't think it can be pigeonholed into one genre.

SKRATCH: Are you exhausted from the process or rejuvenated and ready to hit the road?

PHIL: We're really ready to hit the road. We recorded the album last summer. We're totally stoked to get on the road full-time. [Getting] closer to the record release has been awesome.

SKRATCH: Are there any weird, odd, or funny moments from recording?

PHIL: Our producer, Matt Goldman, is just an awesome guy. Right when he started working with him, he was like, "Have any you guys ever seen the show THE OFFICE?—the BBC version, not the NBC version." He sat us all down and made us watch the show. That brought us all together with the producer.

SKRATCH: So you're ready to tour with Bayside, The Junior Varsity, and Punchline. How much touring have you guys done?

PHIL: I joined Sullivan a little over two years ago, before they had done a couple of regional tours, and we were a three-piece for a while. Last January, Tyson joined the band because we really felt that we needed to add a fourth member to fill out our sound. We did a couple of tours (one with Underoath, Silverstein, and Since by Man). We've done a total of three or four months of touring as a four-piece over the last year.

SKRATCH: In what venues are you most comfortable?

PHIL: We really like playing so much. I can't say that there's a specific venue or town that we like any better [than any other]. We just feel really fortunate to even have kids come out and watch us.

SKRATCH: How do you guys try to reach your fans?

PHIL: Through our Website, Myspace, and Pure Volume. Right now, we're posting a new song every Tuesday until the record comes out on Pure Volume. We've seen a big increase [in fans] that way. And we try to connect with fans by talking to them at shows, hanging out and

having a good time with anyone who wants to.

SKRATCH: Does your band have a creed or mission statement?

PHIL: We're just four guys out there having a good time. We're all Christian dudes. We're not a Christian band, but we are all Christians in a band. We try to go out there, have fun, and be good role models.

SKRATCH: I understand that all of your musical tastes are varied. Are there bands that y'all agree on?

PHIL: We all like a ton of different styles of music. Probably a band we all equally try to model ourselves after would be At the Drive-In or Foo Fighters. And some of the other guys are really into Fountains of Wayne and Green Day. And I'm really into Led Zeppelin. I think we found a good meeting point in the middle and turn each other on to different kinds of music.

"...hanging out and having a good time with anyone who wants to."

SKRATCH: How did you get involved with Sullivan?

PHIL: A few years ago, when Tyson and myself were in another band, we toured a lot. We actually all grew up in North Carolina with the guys from Sullivan. Tyson, my brother, and myself moved to Florida for a few years and toured in a band down there. When Brooks and Zach started Sullivan, we always played shows together whenever we came through North Carolina. When the band in Florida didn't work out, I moved home and ended up talking to Brooks and joining Sullivan.

SKRATCH: I heard that Sullivan used a drum machine before you. Is that true?

PHIL: When they started the band, it wasn't anything serious. They were just

Brooks and Zach writing pop songs together, and they didn't have a drummer, so they used a drum machine. They recorded little demos with it. That had to be about four years ago—way back in the early days.

SKRATCH: Are you and your brother from Underoath close?

PHIL: This is actually the longest we've ever been apart. This is the first time we've been in different bands. We've done other bands together in the past, while one of us was doing school. We're really close; we talk every day. It's been really cool to see Underoath grow so big. They're doing really well. My dad's really into it; he comes out and hangs out whenever they're in town and comes to see them play. The other night, we were shooting our video for the song "Down Here, We All Float", and our dad came out to watch the video till about 2 or 3 in the morning. Our family has gotten really close ever since my brother joined Underoath.

SKRATCH: I heard you guys share an apartment back in North Carolina. How's that working out?

PHIL: The four of us share a two-bedroom apartment. It's a little bigger than the van; and we spend a lot of time in the van together. We're really used to being around each other. If I ever spend any time away from the guys, I start feeling weird. It could have been disastrous or really beneficial, and we're lucky it was really beneficial to be able to handle being around each other 24/7. We're all best friends.

Sullivan's debut album, HEY, I'M A GHOST, hit stores on Tooth and Nail Records on January 24. Sullivan began touring on January 20 and will be hitting the West Coast in February. For more information, check out their Website www.sullivancares.com, Pure Volume, Myspace, or Tooth and Nail Records.

Harrison Bergeron
By Brittany Zane

One would expect heavy discourse during an interview with a band packing enough gusto to name their band after a work by Kurt Vonnegut. However, Harrison Bergeron would rather indulge in literary references for literature's sake and rock out for the sake of rocking out. Vocalist James is a veteran of the political punk scene, while Devon (guitar) and Jameson (drums) are fresh from a more mainstream rock band. Add in new second guitarist Andy and Webby on bass, and it all comes together seamlessly as a mixture of old hardcore with lyrics packed with the sort of open emotion that anyone can find resonance in.

**"WE STILL
RECOGNIZE
THE BANDS
THAT MADE US
WHO WE ARE."**

I connected with James and Andy of the Colorado Springs-based quintet via phone during their tour with Every Time I Die and had quite the eloquent exchange of ideas on everything from dirty little nerdy pleasures to the status of punk rock today.

SKRATCH: First question: why name your band Harrison Bergeron?

JAMES: We're all a bunch of literature geeks and we really love Kurt Vonnegut. Our lyrics are filled with literary quotes and references. "Harrison Bergeron" is a short story you read in high school, and it was our first exposure to Vonnegut.

SKRATCH: Does the story tie in with any of your music?

SKRATCH: Movie quoting. Nice. A favorite pastime of mine.

JAMES: Yeah, we're a bunch of nerds and don't really have person-ality; we just quote movies. This is how lame we are: we actually quoted 3/4 of the first STAR WARS movie back and forth to stay awake on our way home from a show in Salt Lake. [Laughs.]

SKRATCH: Did you use voices?

ANDY: No, no. I'm the big STAR WARS geek, and I'm always correcting them. We don't use voices because we wouldn't pull it off and it would be blasphemous. If anyone did the voices incorrectly, it would piss me off so much that I'd probably want to quit the band.

did you get involved?

JAMES: Devon had heard my singing and asked me to try out and then to join the band.

SKRATCH: How long ago was that?

JAMES: About two years ago. But we've only had this current lineup for about two months. That's when we added Andy.

SKRATCH: So you guys are pretty new. What has been one of the major highlights?

JAMES: Probably when we played with My Chemical Romance.

SKRATCH: Weird. It seems like everything I read about you guys puts you as the antithesis to their kind of music.



Harrison Bergeron

JAMES: No, not really; we just like the story.

SKRATCH: I'm a little shocked. I was expecting a deep response about themes of "enforced equality" or something. So what do you guys write about, then?

JAMES: The theme of our songs is usually just unrequited love. My old band was a socio-political punk rock band called Raised Under Reagan. I'm just tired of politics; I wanted to do something different.

SKRATCH: What kind of music would you consider Harrison Bergeron to be?

JAMES: I'm not very good with pigeonholing bands. If I had to give us a genre, I guess just post-hardcore punk rock. Maybe power slap with an edge. (That was an AIRHEADS reference.)

SKRATCH: What's your favorite movie to quote?

ANDY: Being the STAR WARS nerd, I love anything out of any STAR WARS movie. Since Vegas, we've been quoting a lot of SWINGERS. Also, it's not a movie, but we also love FAMILY GUY and anything from THE SIMPSONS seasons 1-7.

SKRATCH: Finding fellow movie-/literary-quoting enthusiasts can be hard to come by. How did you guys find each other and form Harrison Bergeron?

JAMES: Devon and Jameson were in a radio-rock band called Laymen's Terms and wanted to start something heavier.

SKRATCH: Perfect. You wanted something a little lighter, they wanted something heavier, and you met in the middle. So how

JAMES: [Playing with them] wasn't [because] we're really huge fans of their music or anything: they're just really cool guys, and playing for an audience that size was amazing.

SKRATCH: From what I've read, it also seems like everyone's pitting your group against today's typical hardcore sound. What is it that you have against "new hardcore"?

JAMES: I can't say we hate "new hardcore." [It's just that] we've been doing this for 10 years and we've seen this happen to every other kind of music. It's just depressing to see it all go this way. It's not that those bands aren't working hard or anything like that; it's just watching what it all becomes.

ANDY: We were just talking about

this the other night in Kansas. We were at this show that was that weird indie/screamo rock kind of music, like Early Grace or You and I-and you know that kind of music will never get big. You see how hard those [older] bands work, and they're really helpful to newer bands [that end up getting big,] and it's so difficult to watch those smaller kind of bands never go anywhere. You see these bands influence big bands and never get anything from it. It pisses me off. And it pisses me off even more when those bigger bands don't pay homage to the smaller bands that influenced them. We can play with bigger bands like Atreyu or something, but we come across as different because we still recognize the bands that made us who we are.

SKRATCH: Who would you say are your influences?

JAMES: Older hardcore, mainly-bands like Lifetime, Kid Dynamite, Hot Water Music, Helmet, and Refused.

ANDY: The older, bare bones of hardcore, kind of punk rock like NOFX and The Descendents, too.

SKRATCH: I can definitely hear some Refused in your music.

What's the songwriting process like for you guys?

JAMES: We all work together putting everything together. Well, Devon and Andy usually work on the riff and I write the lyrics, but everyone has a say in the process. I usually do the melody last. I'll sing fake lyrics (or "singlish") to the song while we're writing it, and then putting words to it is easy. I don't know-I'm just weird.

SKRATCH: Who was the band you were most stoked to play with?

ANDY: Lagwagon. It totally just killed us to play with them. We all grew up listening to them. They got us to want to be in a band. It was just awesome to be at a bar with Chris Flippin and Joey Cape. They were the only band any of the guys ever got starstruck by. Being able to have them tell us we did a good job was like a dream come true.

SKRATCH: What are you excited about in the future?

ANDY: [We have] a few more dates on this tour, then we're toying with the idea of recording an EP. After the tour, we aren't playing too many shows; we're chilling out and maybe writing. I'm not on this actual CD, and I'm pret-

ty pumped about being on an actual recording and having my name more associated with the band. I miss my dog, Lando. We're all really excited about getting home to our dogs. Our van is covered with hair from Devon's two dogs. He brings everything from home with him, and [the van] is covered in hair from his chihuahua, Peanut.

Check out Harrison Bergeron's Website: www.harrisonbergeron.net and their Myspace: www.myspace.com/harrisonbergeron.



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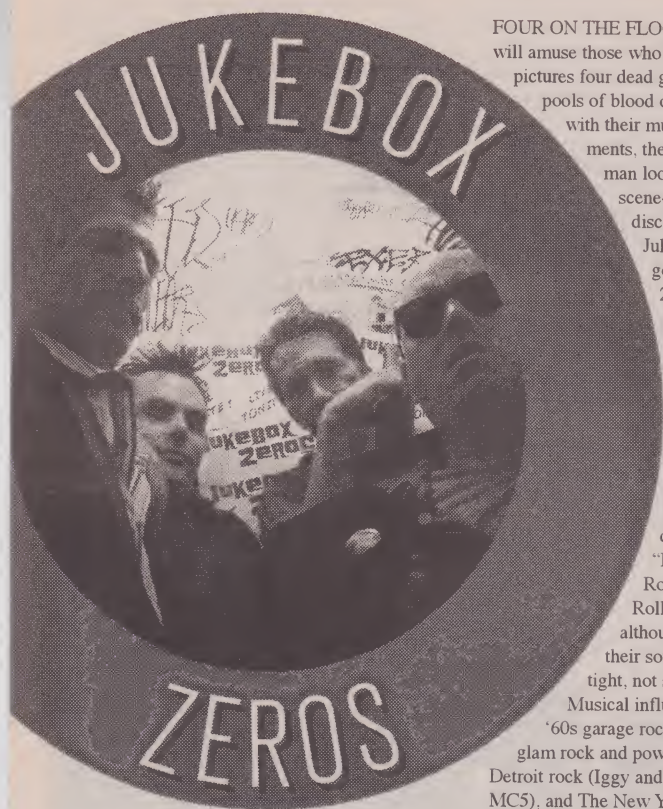
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By Marcia Taylor



FOUR ON THE FLOOR's CD cover will amuse those who enjoy puns. It pictures four dead guys lying in pools of blood on the floor with their musical instruments, the presumed hit-man looking over the scene-hence the disc's title.

Jukebox Zeros got together in 2003, released an EP in March 2005, and are now set to release their first full-length on Steel Cage Records. The band's self-description of "Loud-Sloppy-Rools Rawk 'N' Roll Band" is apt, although I think their sound was pretty tight, not sloppy.

Musical influences include '60s garage rock, a little bit of glam rock and power pop, Detroit rock (Iggy and the Stooges, MC5), and The New York Dolls.

The members of the band-Peter Santa Maria, guitar and vocals; Rob Smentek, bass and vocals; Joe Ankenbrand, drums and vocals; and

me about the new record and more.

SKRATCH: Was recording the new disc easy or difficult?

SANTA MARIA: We started at the end of July 2005.

SMENTEK: It was the hottest day of the year!

SANTA MARIA: Yeah, it was ridiculously hot. We got the tracks laid down, and then Bryan had a stroke. So we waited while he was in the hospital, did the overdubs. And it took a while to mix. Next time we record, I want it to be more lo-fi. It's really trying and stressful being in the studio.

SMENTEK: Sometimes less is more!

SKRATCH: Bryan, I hope that you're all better!

ZARALLO: I'm fully recovered, thank you.

SKRATCH: How did you guys all get connected at the beginning?

SANTA MARIA: We're all huge recordheads and have ridiculous record collections. And Philly has got just a few rock bands. There's a lot of art bands, DJs, and hip-hop. I like to say that I found the only three people in town who wanted to play rock 'n' roll.

SMENTEK: He put up ads around town, and it was the only ad I've ever seen that mentioned The Humpers, so I HAD to answer it.

ANKENBRAND: These guys asked me to join, so I joined. We played our

we've been together since.

SKRATCH: What's Mischief Night? I know Detroit has Hell Night, where people burn things down, but I've never heard of Mischief Night.

SANTA MARIA: It's Halloween. Kids go around and break windows and toilet-paper things. They don't have that where you are?

SKRATCH: We just call it Halloween out here. What is the music scene like in Philadelphia?

ANKENBRAND: The DJ culture takes up most of the space in the clubs-some kid just spinning on his iPod. It's retarded! How easy is it to download songs onto an iPod and play them back? Also, indie music is very dominant, and the indie people are snobbish. And they get all the press, and we get NO press. The writers are all playing in the indie bands!

SANTA MARIA: It's true. We opened for Mudhoney and The Cramps, and it was a sold-out show, and no one wrote it up. But they'll write up an indie show with 25 kids who show up and 24 of them are on the guest list. We have played out of town and done really well. It's a blessing and a curse, because we can hibernate in Philly and then play out of town once a month. We just want people to hear what we're doing and dig it. It's good stuff for people who still care about music.

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SKRATCH: Are you happy to be on Steel Cage Records?

SANTA MARIA: Yes. We're the 49th release on the label. Me and Rob write for the [label's] magazine, CARBON 14. The label also publishes a review guide for underground movies, B MOVIE BUFFET. They work really hard to get attention for the bands on the label. And it's cool to be on a local label. When we sent out the EP to other labels, people liked it a lot but weren't willing to put any money into promoting it.

SKRATCH: I like the cover of the CD and the title, too. How did you come up with that?

SMENTEK: We came up with "FOUR ON THE FLOOR" while jamming. Joe uses a four-on-four beat, a basic Motown drum style. So, I envisioned us on the floor, either drunk or dead. I was thinking of PULP FICTION, film noir, a '40s style movie poster....

SKRATCH: Tell me about some of the songs on the record, please.

SANTA MARIA: "Flophouse" is about this horrible place I used to live in with really, really terrible roommates, where lots of crazy shit happened. And we used to practice in the basement. "Death of the Drive-In" is about how everything is changing and lots of stuff is just going away.

SMENTEK: ("You're My) Favorite Drug" is a great Replacements rip-off. "Film Noir Love" came to me in the car. I stole it from The Humpers. [Laughs]

ANKENBRAND: Rob and I are in a

surf band, and I wrote "Don't Tell Me" 10 years ago for that. That's how prolific I am: one song in 10 years! SANTA MARIA: "High Tension Wire" is a Dead Boys cover. We love them, and I hadn't heard anyone else cover it. We always have a new cover; we're huge musicheads. We try to write stripped-down rock 'n' roll with hooks you can sing along to.

SKRATCH: So that's you're modus operandi: playing rock 'n' roll?

SMENTEK: You're supposed to like music your parents hate. If you like Coldplay, you might as well just sit and listen to them with your parents!

SANTA MARIA: Rob is a punk-rock Don Rickles. He insults the drummer and me. He can't be mean to Bryan or he'll have another stroke. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Yeah, that's a crazy story about a guy as young as you are, Bryan, having a stroke.

May I ask, did you have an aneurysm?

ZARALLO: No. I was driving home one night and I was stressed out, dehydrated, and exhausted, so I thought I'd be fine after getting a night's sleep. My symptom was that I was leaning to the left; I couldn't walk straight. When I woke up, I still couldn't walk straight, so I went to the emergency room. I was sitting there worried about the fact that the guys were in the studio and hoping that they could come up with something without me.

SANTA MARIA: Yeah, he's calling us up from the emergency room to apologize for being there!

ZARALLO: Yeah, they're scheduling MRIs and CAT scans for me while those guys are trying to record.

SKRATCH: Did you guys ever hear about the drummer from The Beat Farmers, who died onstage during a show from a stroke? He keeled over and actually kept drumming a little while after he keeled over. It got a lot of press quite a while ago, when it happened. Bryan, if you wanted to be considerate of your fellow bandmates, you should have had your stroke onstage and gotten some free publicity. [Laughs]

SANTA MARIA: All the papers here would have printed is that some indie-rocker was having trouble tuning his guitar. [Laughs]



"WE TRY TO WRITE STRIPPED-DOWN
ROCK 'N' ROLL WITH HOOKS
YOU CAN SING ALONG TO."

SKRATCH: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

SANTA MARIA: We hope people pick the record up and come see us play. We should be touring with The Earaches in May, if it comes together. And Rob has been an emo freak since 2003! [Laughs]

You can learn more about Jukebox Zeros by visiting www.steelcagerecords.com. To comment on this or any other interview you see in SKRATCH, feel free to e-mail us at speakup@skratchmagazine.com.

HOMESICK ABORTIONS

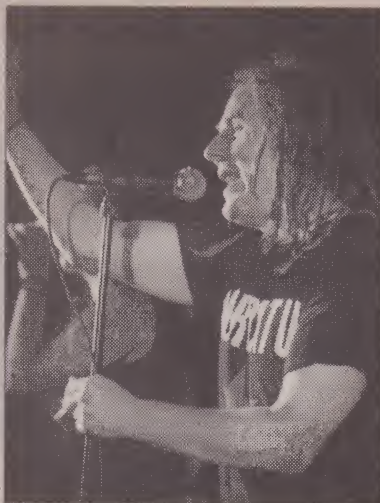


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Ahead to the Sea

AHEAD TO THE SEA
By Justin Lutz

For years, musicians of all genres have used political unrest and conflict as a source of lyrical inspiration and have used their songs as a rallying point to convey their dissent to like-minded individuals. In these days of war, poverty, death, and disease, Germany-based band Ahead to the Sea show that Americans are not the only people unhappy with the current state of the world.

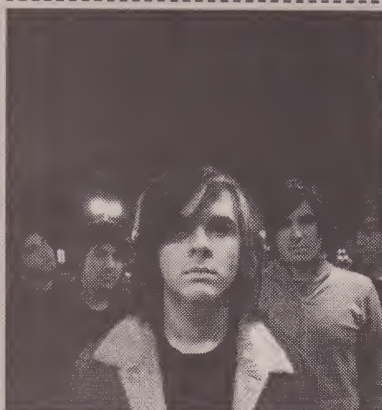
With the world full of current trends in music, Ahead to the Sea create a sound that is all their own. Blending elements of folk, punk, and ska, the band creates an exciting, danceable beat that perfectly balances all the elements involved in creating their incredible sound. The band's debut album, URBAN PIRATE

SOUNDSYSTEM, is a testament to Ahead to the Sea's determination and skill as musicians. Their powerful debut not only showcases precise and well-arranged musicianship but also carries a powerful and thought-provoking message—two characteristics hard to perfect in one package.

The message that Ahead to the Sea provides in their music is not necessarily targeted toward one individual, organization, or entity. If there is one message that is most prominent, it is the importance of independent thinking and organization. The idea that corporations and political parties are not needed for change is a focal point in the songs; and it's showcased not only in the lyrics, but also in the tray insert, which has a large quote listing ways in which individuals can make a positive change and affect society and the

world as a whole. Ahead to the Sea use the power, melody, and addictive nature of URBAN PIRATE SOUNDSYSTEM to demonstrate to their fans and listeners worldwide that change is possible and that all you must do is "kill the apathy in you."

With an incredibly powerful debut album and an intense live presence under their belts, Ahead to the Sea are poised to bring a conscious change to the underground music scene—in terms of both music and message. The band's tour dates, downloadable music, and everything you could ever want to know about them can be found at www.ahead-to-the-sea.com.



THE COLOR TURNING

THE COLOR TURNING
By Jeff Lambert

"Right now, we act as the performer, songwriter, booking agent, publicist and management," says bassist Jason Abraham. "We're really looking forward to the day that we only have to make music and can leave the business to others." Another overworked indie band. Since their inception in late 2001, The Color Turning (TCT) have worked their asses off playing shows while quietly garnering the respect of their peers on the local indie-rock circuit. After tinkering with the lineup a few times, the five-piece ensemble have recently taken the form they always envisioned. These ambient indie rockers from Orange County (no, we don't really call it the O.C.) have recently issued their newest EP, ANTIDOTE. After funding the record themselves, they hooked up with Mannequin Records, who agreed to take over the pressing and promotion duties

for the new EP. Apparently, someone thought they were worth listening to, including producer Alex Newport (of At the Drive-In/The Mars Volta fame), who recently finished laying down some truly good tracks with TCT (which can be heard exclusively at www.myspace.com/thecolorturning).

Go ahead and try to put a label on them: they could care less. "We're not interested in that. We try to make music that doesn't just lump us into a category with others," Jason says. Mostly considered ambient indie rock, TCT have been called everything from pop to romantic rock. ("That one was pretty cool," Jason admits.) Drawing on influences varying from Radiohead to The Dismemberment Plan, these multifaceted musicians don't rely on the verse-chorus-verse format of most radio rock; instead, they focus on strong harmonies and intricate melodies that add depth and showcase their collective talent. Each

song slowly builds from melodic verses to singer Steve Scavo's big choruses and drummer Gareth Powell's crashing crescendos. "It's important to write songs that are musically complex," Jason explains. "Yet each song can be stripped down to such a simple state that you could play them around the bonfire with your friends."

Right now, TCT are concentrating on building a reputation in and around the L.A. area, relentlessly playing shows like it's going out of style. They will be rocking everyone's favorite all-ages sweatbox, Chain Reaction, with Jonah on February 24 and possibly heading out to SXSW in March. Their short-term goal: have everyone in the Southwest know who they are, then move on from there. Judging from their obvious talent and dedicated work ethic, it shouldn't be long before more than a few of you bump into The Color Turning at one place or another. Until then, check them out at www.thecolorturning.com.



DEMIRICOUS

DEMIRICOUS
By Brett Powell

Welcome a new metal phenomenon to the stage: Demiricous! One of Metal Blade Records' newest signings is on an impossible mission of world domination for 2006. Says Brian Slagel, owner/CEO of Metal Blade Records Inc., "We are so excited to welcome Demiricous to the Metal Blade family. We have been searching for a new, young, real heavy metal band from the U.S.A. for quite some time. Demiricous fits that bill perfectly."

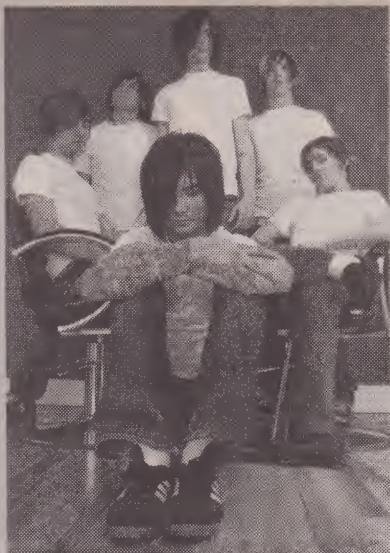
Demiricous' brand-new album, ONE, hit the streets January 24 packed full of old-school riffs, heavy-metal solos, and the raw thrash that hasn't been fresh since Slayer's debut in 1983! Produced by legendary metal producer Zeuss (Hatebreed, The Red

Chord, Shadows Fall), Demiricous' debut full-length effort will take you by surprise and quickly make its way into your demolition arsenal. Demiricous calls their signature sound "street metal! No fuckin' hairdos, ex-girlfriends, or lame shit—just good fuckin' times and raging metal."

Demiricous already have already shredded on a full resume of tours, including with Exodus, Malevolent Creation, Extol, King Diamond, The Black Dahlia Murder, and Obituary. They even took over the main stage at the infamous New England Hardcore and Metal Fest 2005.

Guitarist Scott Wilson comments, "I'm an old-school motherfucker, and I miss the rage-and the hooks and the solos." Without doubt, ONE delivers all the rage, hooks, and solos metalheads have been

waiting for. This band has now entered metal history. Prepare yourselves for the new "masters of metal!"



DROP DEAD, GORGEOUS

Drop Dead Gorgeous

By Marisa Raskin

Nothing beats the passionately feisty erosions of a voice whose words come from a heart that has seemingly been broken more than once. Beyond the layered screams and yells of vocalist Danny Stills, the music shoots out of the instruments with an unstoppable speed and energy. Although they have yet to go on tour (and some of the members have yet to receive a high-school diploma), Drop Dead Gorgeous have acquired an extra piece to the puzzle: keyboardist Aaron (who also adds vocals). Aaron's astonishing fingerwork augments the music, delivering a tasteful orchestral feel. Image-wise, the casual appearance of each member fits together with the look of the whole.

Once Drop Dead Gorgeous was officially a full band, they immediately got down to business in their hometown Denver, where the scene greatly expanded and became an ideal source of support. Evidently, this spread into the Internet's infamous music networks, Myspace and Purevolume, helping to create a name for the band. Rise Records (Coretta Scott, A Fall Farewell, Paint by Numbers) took notice and in no time signed DDG. BE MINE, VALENTINE (EP)-a perfect soundtrack for a break-up-was then recorded with Kris Crummett (Fear Before the March of Flames, Anatomy of a Ghost) and released. Since then, this Norma Jean-influenced band has managed to pack the live shows "with less talk and more rock," claims Aaron. The band's upcoming full-length album (expected May 2),

IN VOGUE, is awaited with much anticipation.



FROM APHONY

From Aphony

By Marisa Raskin

Common: a high-school band fitting every bit of the term "entry-level," ultimately thrashing noise rather than music while their comic-book bubbles cloud thoughts of someday being the next Kurt Cobain or what have you. Meanwhile, their latest gig is at the school talent show. Smells like teen spirit. Uncommon: a high-school band fitting every bit of the term "goal-oriented," ultimately well-rehearsed and eager enough to make great music while hustling for a record deal, apparel endorsements, a steady fan base, etc.-all while their current involvements include a music video for "Love by Way of Hollywood" with 21-year-old director Kevin Maistros (Coretta Scott, Mae, The Static Age).

From Aphony is uncommon. This five-piece band came together in mid 2004 in Seattle while merely adolescents, and they have since proved that a little determination and perseverance can open plenty of back doors, such as the one which led to Less Avenged Records (another establishment of high-schoolers). After getting signed, they managed to land studio time at Robert Lang Studios (Nirvana, Finch). Although their full-length, 11-track album BUILDERS, WRECKERS, LOVERS, AND TAKERS has been promoted as post-hardcore meets screamo, youthful energy is a magnet to all communities of music listeners out to be entertained and have a good time. The music itself includes piercing distortion and spontaneous screaming-and yet they have acoustic songs I can imagine attracting a feminine audience

From Aphony surpasses amateurism in both musicianship and business and takes charge. Considering the advantages of being signed and in their prime so young, they are more than ready to hit the road and play a multitude of sold-out shows. They have plenty of time to work out their originality within the metalcore scene, and in time they'll become a role model to those who have a serious agenda; but for now, their day job is high school.



If All Else Fails

If All Else Fails

By Tim Posada

The cliché begins. The lights were down, and the crowd's anticipation filled the room. But the cliché ended when the lights went up and a video clip from SPIDER-MAN 2 began with a voiceover in Japanese, followed by If All Else Fails inviting 500 Japanese 20somethings to fill the empty stagefront. This was Kenshu 2006 at Citrus College in Glendora, CA-an event that brought hundreds of people from Japan for a weekend of speakers and performances. This isn't a normal occurrence for If All Else Fails...but their career has been anything but the rock-star norm.

The band is Ryan Huber and Joshua Manville on guitar, Ryan Murphy on vocals, Thomas Capossela on bass, and LoGerfo on drums. Quitting that day job isn't

an option for these punk-rockers, whose occupations range from substitute teacher to Disneyland audio engineer. IAEF's album DO NOT FORGET TO BE ANGRY isn't exactly in stores, but it's so close in the production process that any music store can order it. It is just sitting on dusty shelves rather than in department-store displays. IAEF are in the process of working on a tour, but the album's absence is hindering this process.

IAEF have been a band on the verge for several years. "We have warning-track power," Murphy said. "We hit the shit out of the ball, but somehow the wind catches it and it drops on the white track for an easy out. We're all pretty good at being in a band, but we're not very good at promoting ourselves." Still, the band has kept their name afloat with SoCal shows and two songs on an upcoming Sublime tribute album (also on their label).

IAEF hold to a general punk philosophy with a sound rooted in Sublime-esque punk. "Christian Vengeance" is a prime example of lyricist Murphy's views. This song attacks Christianity as an institution (and not as a faith) for abuses against humankind in the name of someone who stood for peace. Murphy hopes that IAEF's music will create a dialogue with less hostility between groups that otherwise are antagonistic. "I'm not expecting our songs to change anyone," Murphy says, "but if it for a moment someone can question something they do blindly, that's what I hope."

DO NOT FORGET TO BE ANGRY is out now and can be ordered through any music store. For upcoming shows and music downloads, check them out on the Web at www.ifalleasefails.net, Pure Volume, and MySpace. IAEF are covering "Forever Free" and "Wrong Way" on the Sublime tribute album FOREVER FREE (in stores January 24).



LIVE REVIEWS

CAREER SOLDIERS CHEAP SEX HOLOKAUST

December 23, 2005 @ Showcase
(Corona, CA)
By Gabby Kelly

With the holidays comes a time of joy—never more true for all of those who had the opportunity to catch this great show. Having already missed Holokaust twice, I knew I had to sacrifice my Christmas shopping to attend this show...and I have not regretted to do so, for this was by far was the best gift I received this year. This crust-anarcho band put on a good and fun show. With their raw beats and

political lyrics, they were able to pump up the kids right from the first song. The band generates passionate, fast melodies that pump the crowd full of energy and excitement.

Cheap Sex, one of the most influential street-punk bands, took the stage. Being that this was about my fifth time seeing them play, I can honestly say that they only get better, rougher, faster, and more exciting every time. It took 15 seconds of their opener to get the crowd spazzing out the noise of these five young boys. The crowd was eager to get a closer look, pushing and shoving up to the front and creating a mob of love for the music. The bouncers failed to keep people of stage (crowd-surfing is a must during a Cheap Sex set), so they gave up and just let the fans enjoy and dance in the huge pit.

Finally, what most of us were waiting for arrived: Career Soldiers, a supercharged, pogo-dancing, catchy, and (most importantly) talented band filled the venue with sound of good punk rock. Overwhelmed with excitement, I couldn't help to notice how down to earth these people are. Never acting superior to the kids in the audience, they gave their all with gratitude and warmth. Being far away from home during the holidays sucks for anyone, but the band reminded everyone that the love of music is much greater and more important than receiving unwanted gifts; and they gave everyone there the gift of being able to walk out with an experience that will remain in our memories forever.

PRIMA DONNA THE REKONING MIDNIGHT SCARS LATEX LADS

December 29, 2005 @ the Showcase
Theatre (Corona, CA)

I hate the Showcase Theatre...but I really don't need to elaborate. But tonight I thought I was in for a treat, because The Havoc were playing. But my dreams would be shattered by the biggest gathering of fashionable crap I've ever witnessed.

Opening bands usually suck. It's a very well known fact that has been engraved on my psyche by almost every opening band I've ever seen...but Latex Lads were different. They opened up with a brilliant rendition of "The Punk Go Marching in" to the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again". They got things really moving when they busted into "Don't Judge Us", which is a basic formulaic punk-rock anthem, but a damn good one. This band exuded the energy I've come to expect from many of the bands I go to see. From their young appearance, I assume that Daniel, Frank, Chris, and Miguel are still in high school, but this is definitely one band I hope to see more from in the future.

Midnight Scars made me wonder something: was the smoke machine really necessary? They present themselves even before they get started as something that quite possibly is going to be the greatest thing I've ever witnessed (like '80s hair-metal bands did with their silly theatrics). Another thing: are punk bands supposed to have so many fucking solos? They look like they came out of URBAN COWBOY, with studded belts; and sound like the bastard children of Motley Crue. One song, "Midnight City", made me want to quite literally put a bullet in my head. This is the first time ever that I actually had to purchase ear plugs. They fucking sucked. And vocalist Mike Gunns needs to loose 400 pounds.

After what was the worst band I've ever seen, The ReKoning were up to bat. I had walked outside for a moment and heard the distinct thump of an upright bass. It didn't quite sound like psychobilly, though: it was traditional punk rock played with an upright bass (kind of like The Cramps). These guys were a breath of fresh air, with their upbeat, and uplifting lyrics...Definitely different from the normal, pre-apocalyptic struggle exuded by the crust/anarcho bands I usually listen to and the fashioncore bullshit I was witnessing earlier. There was a definite Oi! influence with these guys. It's quite obvious they share a lot in common with The Dropkick Murphys, The Cockney Rejects, and Blitz—especially when they put down the upright bass for a still-unconventional five-string. Songs like "Saturday Night" and

"Necessary Violence" remind me of what punk is...or what it once was.

I'm sure everyone who is into punk has heard of pre-punk wonders such as The New York Dolls or The Johnny Thunders. If you haven't, go pick up pretty much any album by either and don't be fooled by shoddy imitations or something that isn't quite the real deal (like, say, Prima Donna). The band itself isn't horrible. They come on stage in drag (closely mimicking The New York Dolls' glam-rock) and play pre-punk-style music without any real edge to it. It is definitely something I couldn't listen to all day...but it's mildly better than Midnight Scars.

Did I know that The Havoc were a Christian band? No, I did not. But when I found out, did I care? Not really. See, there is something unique about The Havoc. They play fast-paced, fashionable punk rock—I really could care less about their religious affiliations. They played "Road Runner" relatively early in their set, which is a fun, catchy song that is easy to get into. I noticed a lot of shit-talking because of the band's beliefs. People in the crowd just couldn't accept the fact that they are Christians. But The Havoc don't wear their beliefs on their back; they weren't thrusting them upon us. To me, that deserves credit.

Well, the night was over. I had my fill of Christian bands, studs, hairspray, and cowboy punkers that sound like Motley Crue taking a dump.

AMERICAN EYES

SKYLINE COLLAPSE

DEATH BY STEREO



AMERICAN EYES EUDORA SKYLINE COLLAPSE DEATH BY STEREO

December 30, 2005 @ Chain Reaction
(Anaheim, CA)

Text and Photos by: Audiophile

Death By Stereo is one awesome band...but we'll get to Death By Stereo later. First, let's talk about the opening acts. American Eyes started out the night with some extremely catchy pop-punk tunes. Now, I know what you're thinking: a pop-punk band opening for a hardcore band? Trust me, stranger things have happened—and the crowd didn't mind one bit. American Eyes had their own set of teenage girls pressed up against the stage singing every word to every song (which included "The Girl with the Broken Heart (By the Way)", "Telephone Wires", and "Radio"). Even though I generally hate pop-punk, American Eyes play the good variety of it. They're original, fun, funny, and catchy. Check them out for yourself at WWW.Americaneyesmusic.Com. (The guitarist of this band had a little message he asked me to include for his girlfriend, so the rest of you can just ignore this, if you wish: Michael says mice have nothing to worry about when other mice go out of town.)

Eudora graced the stage next with their brand of screamo (I'm not sure what else to call it). I'm not the biggest fan of screamo. Again, how did a screamo band end up opening for a hardcore band like Death By Stereo? I'm not sure, but whoever did the booking for this show sure had a lot of fun. The crowd didn't seem to mind—and Eudora aren't half bad, for what they are. They popped out tune

after tune, such as "Satellites on Parade", "Every Answer Mute", "Breakfast of a Killer", and "Mishaps and Circumstances". The only thing that REALLY bugged me was the singer: he was all dirty and needed a shave. He looked as if he just got done working in a warehouse or on a dock—which is a fine look if you actually work in a warehouse or on a dock...but it's not so great on stage. Hopefully he cleans up a bit better for other shows. You can listen to Eudora at WWW.Myspace.Com/Eudoramusic.

Now, Skyline Collapse are more of what I would expect at a show like this. They were hard, they were loud, and they were fast. They also happened to get the first mosh pit of the night started—and wow, what a mosh pit. It's the third-most intense pit I've ever been in. (When you go into a lot of pits, you end up keeping track.) I was hit in the ribs numerous times, head-butted in the ear, punched in the eye, and I think someone bit me. It was good stuff—so good that I couldn't get one decent shot off, so if you see no pictures of Skyline Collapse to go with this piece, you know why. I wasn't paying attention to song names while I was moshing, but I was lucky enough to have a friend grab the set list for me, so I can tell you EXACTLY what they played. I got my ass kicked (and did some ass-kicking of my own) to tunes such as "This Year", "When Cities Fall", "The Resistance", "Endless Journey", "A Strength Emerging", and "The . B, be sure to check them out at WWW.Skylinecollapse.Com.

Just before Death By Stereo took the stage, a group of kids (late teens/early 20s) came up to me and complimented me on my moshing skills, which was a very pleasant thing. But my skills couldn't protect me in the Death By Stereo pit. I was pressed up right against the stage listening to them blast out hardcore anthem after hardcore anthem (such as "Emo Holocaust", "Desperation Train", "Sing Along with the Patriotic Punx", and "No Shirt, No Shoes, No Salutation"). During this hellfest of crushing bodies, flying fists, and feet flying



for your face, a rather romantic moment happened: one of the band's friends purposed to his girlfriend on stage. Even through the blood and the pain, it was one of the sweetest things ever. It's always nice when someone gets purposed to on stage. It never gets old, and it's always a crowd-pleaser. Be sure to check out Death By Stereo at WWW.Deathbystereo.Com.

After leaving the venue (and consequently being able to breathe and move again (though not without a hell of a lot of pain)), I reflected on the madness I had just witnessed inside of the club. And there is only one word to describe the whole thing: intense. Well worth the suffering. I think it is safe to say that not one person at Chain Reaction tonight left unscathed.

BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE

December 31, 2005 @ Rock City
(Nottingham, England)

By Thomas Murray

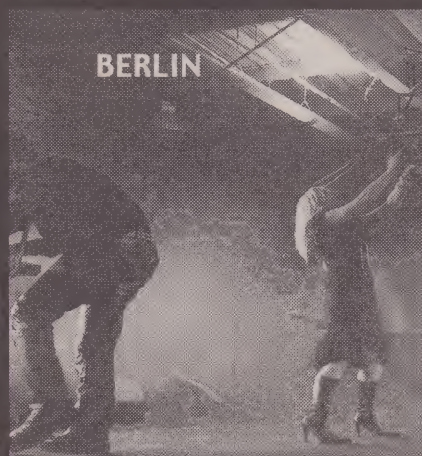
Silhouettes of devil horns in the beams of red light cutting from the stage through pluming smoke—the unmistakable shapes of a heavy-metal show. Shoulders turned and heads bobbed. Mosh pits bubbled and fizzed like the domestic brew that fueled them. I turned to my date and knowingly hissed in her ear, "This is a Metallica cover." Seconds later I realized that I am an idiot and that it was a Pantera cover. Bullet for My Valentine were rocking so hard. "To all the hot bitches out there" went a dedication of "Tears Falling". A few English drunks snuggled a bit closer, but my date avoided me like the plague—probably because I was yelling my ass off and jumping up and down throwing elbows. The song winded down, and the place got a bit quieter. "Hand...of...Blood" dramatically boomed out in a slow but convincing manner. The effect lingered like merciless amounts of stripper perfume, while the quick fingering of an electric guitar intro built us up before the song exploded full force. The floor went nuts. The steel staircases groaned under the weight of stomping, jumping maniacs. The energy of Rock City was full blown. BFMV finished up with "Four Words (to Choke On)". I'll give you four

words: How about an encore? Or: Play until 12 o'clock. (Even in the best of listening situations, this song drags me back to early 2005, when the new Madden NFL came out. Shamefully, I admit that I found out about BFMV because "Four Words" is one of the songs featured on that Playstation game.) As good as BFMV was on this night, they left us high and dry with no band to bring in the New Year. So now we have to listen to the damn radio while the ball drops? Crap. Actually, the house music was bad-ass in the big room: I heard some Rammstein and that new Korn song. There is no better way to celebrate New Year's than with hundreds of sweaty lunatics in black T-shirts playing air guitar and drinking their asses off. There was no sign of champagne anywhere as the clock approached 12 (nor cigars, either), just machines frothing soap onto a few Lemmy lookalikes sneering over near the stairwell. A similar machine fired out what looked like snowflakes that fell gently onto the mayhem. I foolishly stuck out my tongue to find that it was thinly-sliced soap shavings. What the hell is with all the soap? Just good clean fun, I guess. Ouch.

Did I mention that Rock City doesn't cease serving drinks until 8 the next morning? A smaller room downstairs featured the metal from a few years back. Down in that steamy cellar you got your dose of Maiden, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi, AC/DC, etc. Imagine the way you jump around your bedroom when no one is watching, while some crazy air-guitar riff

makes you lean back and close your eyes while belting out the lyrics. Well, that is what most of the room was doing. I've never seen anything like it. It was amazing to see a whole dungeon dance floor swarming in approval of a good time and great music. Don't get me wrong: In certain corners still lurked the "too cool," but even those cursed with excessive self-awareness still had to submit to certain songs and shake their asses while banging their heads.

Between the hours of 12 and 2 was when I noticed the majority of the puking and the reassuring hugs of those about to pass out. The numbers diminished only slightly as shadowy security guards gently nudged some sleeping drunks toward the cold exits. Around 3, the hours of desperation began. Horny solo artists pawed their way through the crowd seeking partners for jam sessions. Standards were lowering, and somewhere a sign flashed: "Musicians wanted, experience optional." I learned that the British have no shame when it comes to bad dancing and dirty pick-up lines. I had long since lost my date to the endless dance floors that led out to the street and perhaps some Alfie-wannabe's flat. I overpaid for a taxi and a hotel room and slept with ringing ears and sore (from dancing) calves. In my dreams I calculated my losses and cursed the hangover I had yet to embrace.



**ORANGE DROP NEW
YEARS EVE :
THE EYELINERS
BOW WOW WOW
BERLIN
REEL BIG FISH
JOAN JETT AND THE
BLACKHEARTS
PSYCHEDELIC FURS
BULLETS AND OCTANE
and others**

December 31, 2005 @ The Orange
County Fair Grounds, (Costa Mesa, CA)
Photos and text by Todd Markel

Ever have the urge to celebrate New Years
Eve in style, with your favorite bands playing
all night long and a large illuminated ball



THE EYELINERS

drop at midnight? Well if traveling all the way to the Big Apple is out of the question, then the inaugural OCNYE "Orange Drop" at the Fair Grounds in Costa Mesa was the next best thing. The event was being billed as the largest celebration of its kind on the west coast, with over 30 bands and DJ's set to entertain, as you party out the old and ring in the new. Rain showers throughout the day had threatened to cancel the event, but the weather cleared up and the show went on as scheduled.

Attendees had their choice of general admission tickets or for about double the price, VIP wristbands, lets just say that I ran into more than a few pissed off VIPs throughout the night. With a show of this kind you can either find a place to plant yourself and party all night, or make an attempt to see as many bands as humanly possible, I opted for the later.

With a list of band set times in hand, I made my way to the Indie 103.1 stage to see The Eyeliners, an all girl group in the same vein as The Randles. They started their set with a



REEL BIG FISH

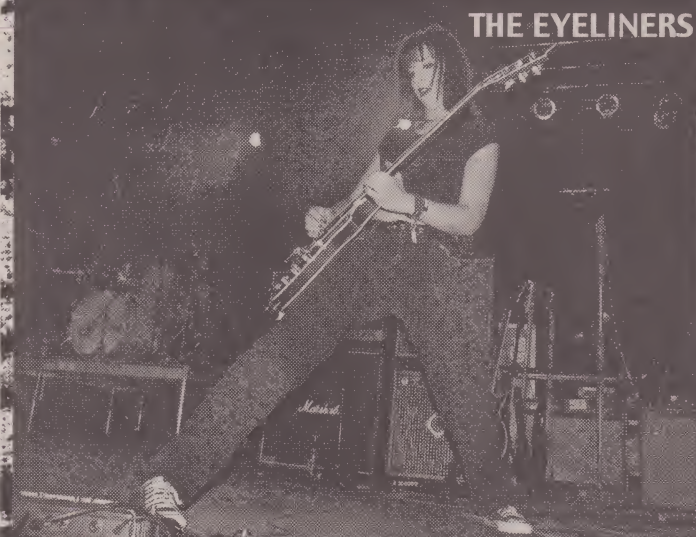
song called "Here Comes Trouble" and went on to play a number of songs from their latest release NO APOLOGIES (Blackheart Records). Next door on the OC Register Stage, The Color were just getting started with their jazzy, bluesy, sound. Lead singer Wyatt Hull reminds me a lot of a younger Val Kilmer portraying Jim Morrison. I was anxious to stake out a good place to see Bow Wow Wow. They kicked it off with "Giant Sized Baby Thing" and went right into the tribal rhythms of W.O.R.K. Annabella teased the audience with a "I'll take something off, if you take something off" and after a number of t-shirts were thrown on stage, she obliged by taking off her overcoat to reveal what appeared to be a belly dancer outfit. After their playful hit, "Do You Wanna Hold Me?" it was time to check out the main stage, but as it turns out they were running over an hour behind schedule. I made it back to the side stage just in time to catch Bullets and Octane ripping it up with their first song "Signed in Alcohol". The last time I caught their act, Bullets and Octane showed what a kick ass band they can be, and tonight's show was no exception. Lead singer Gene Louis is every bit a rock star and puts on

a great show. The continued their set with "Sweet Dreams" from their CD, **THE REVELRY** and eventually closed with the killer "Save Me Sorrow". Terri Nunn of Berlin took the stage to a big welcome, she told the crowd she was a new mom and held up pictures of her pride and joy for all to see. They played all their hits from "No More Words", "Riding the Metro" to "Take my Breath Away" I reluctantly had to pull myself away to see my favorite Orange County band Reel Big Fish. Aaron Barrett and the boys started with the old standby "Everything Sucks" and then went right into their latest effort "The Fire" from their most recent CD, **WERE NOT HAPPY TILL YOUR NOT HAPPY**. After Aaron introduced their cover of the Cure's "Boys Don't Cry" I decided to see if

Lit has taken the main stage yet. Sure enough, Lit seems to have been on stage for a while. With Danny Walker of the band Handsome Devil helping out, they played a punked up version of "Aud Lang Syne" and closed with a rousing rendition of "My Own Worst Enemy" that had everyone, including myself singing along. The high point of the night had to be seeing the queen of punk rock Joan Jett. When they played the old Runaways song "Cherry Bomb" the pit erupted with the chorus of "Hello world/ I'm your wild girl/ Cherry Bomb! ". "Do You Want to Touch Me There? " and its chorus of "Yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah" had everyone pumping their fist in the air and shouting along. Some idiot ran on stage and attempted to give Joan a hug as she played,

which really seemed to creep her out, but she carried on by playing their hit "Bad Reputation". Time to run again, (This show kept me running all night long) to one of the side stages where the Psychedelic Furs were taking the audience back to the '80s with songs like "Pretty In Pink" and "Love my Way". The headliners of the evening were Orange County popsters Sugar Ray who went on just after midnight and the anticlimactic Orange Drop. I stuck around for a few songs including "When its Over" and "Falls Apart" but noticing the fog rolling in I decided to make my exit before all the drunks hit the streets. Great event and I'm looking forward to it next year.

THE EYELINERS

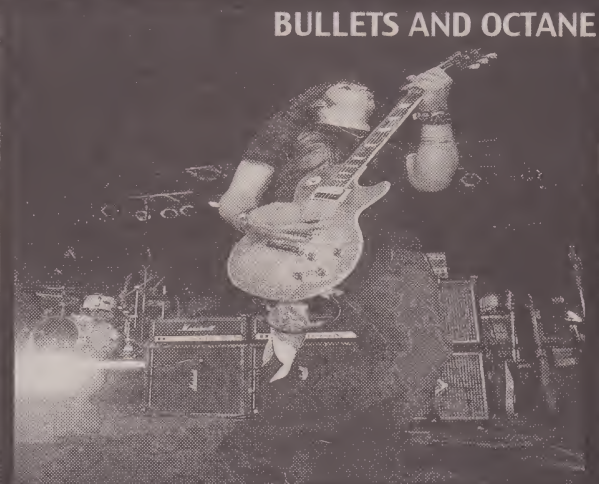


JOAN JETT



BOW WOW WOW

BULLETS AND OCTANE



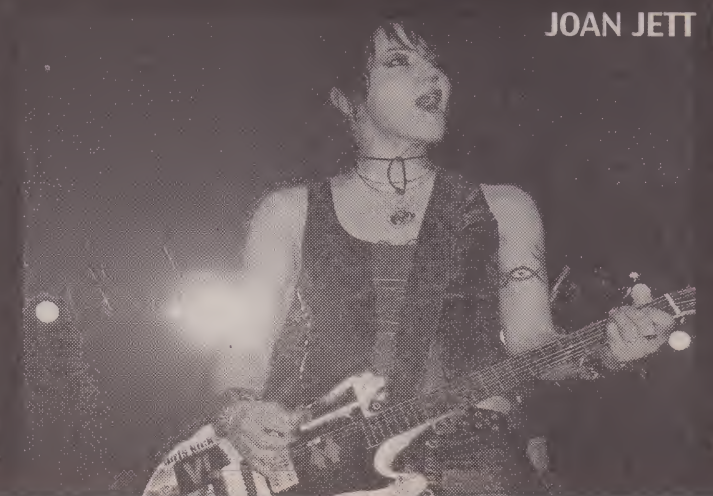
THE COLOR



REEL BIG FISH



JOAN JETT



The Adolescents The Cadillac Tramps Time Again Bad Reaction

January 6, 2006 @ the El Rey (Los Angeles, CA)

By Marcos "The Pomp" Nevarez

As I walked through the doors and past the bar of the dimly-lit El Rey Theater, I was greeted by a chubby figure taking the mic on stage. As I reached the front of the stage, I was inundated by the pounding punk sounds of Bad Reaction. Instantly my head was banging, and I could feel the pit about to erupt. Frontman Kash stomped around the stage jamming the mic into his head while dropping to one knee with a look on his face like a little boy who just found a PLAYBOY. Their cover of Bad Brain's "Pay to Cum" instantly had me flying through the pit, as the band kept a breakneck speed that would make Darryl Jenifer proud. With an old-school sound that is their own, Bad Reaction is definitely a band worth seeing.

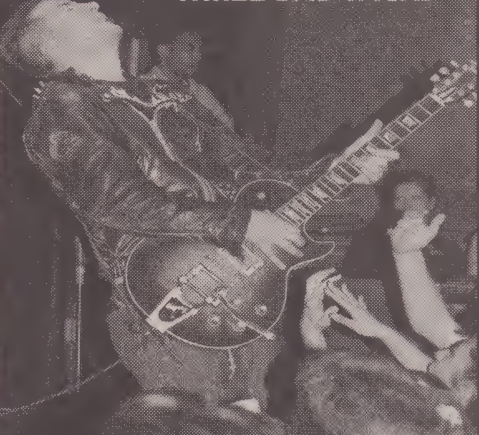
After seeing Bad Reaction, Time Again just didn't hold up. Everyone in the band had great stage presence, thrashing about the stage, doing the one-foot monitor plant into the exaggerated vertical power chord, etc. They were thoroughly entertaining to watch, but musically they sounded like every other band who listens to too much Rancid and other late punk bands. The little girls behind me were going crazy, but I just wasn't feeling it. They were the band that's okay in your friend's backyard but not actually worth seeing anywhere else.

When The Cadillac Tramps rolled up, you knew it, as these vatos brought everything but the '64 Impala. Decked out in swanky duds complete with flat caps, suspenders, and low-rider hats, they dished out their own style of humorous, rock 'n' roll-inspired punk. Singer Mike "Gabby" Gaborno was hilarious, as always. Periodically ripping open his shirt, Gabby stood on stage like a mall Santa who's had too much to drink, laughing while jiggling a happy face he had drawn on his stomach. Throwing out song after song, like chingas in the pit, the band even threw out money to pay back those who didn't like them. With songs like "Should I", The Cadillac Tramps shed light on the ills of society with humor. Cracking jokes throughout their set and making you stop headbanging to laugh, they rolled off stage all too soon. These esés

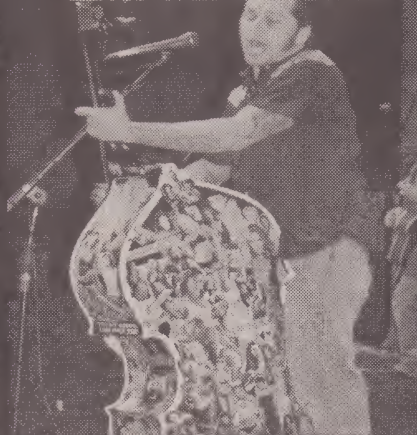
serve it up right—and with mad style, too.

There was magic in the air before The Adolescents took the stage. As the crowd began to grow, the MARY POPPINS soundtrack filled the room, as we eagerly awaited the Orange County punk legends. Kids chatted in excitement about seeing their punk-rock heroes for the first time, as their elders in the crowd reminisced about past shows, reliving their glory days 20 years later. Then, as "Chim Chim Cher-ee" faded out, that familiar sound detonated from the PA system, and instantly the whole theater was in an uproar. A pit erupted in the middle of the dance floor, and we were all entranced by the glory that is The Adolescents. They didn't have any big stage theatrics—and they didn't need any. We all knew the songs. If you weren't in the pit, you were trying to crowd-surf your way on stage (or at least nodding your head to the music). Whether it was old favorites like "Democracy" and "Amoeba" or new songs off their latest release, OC CONFIDENTIAL, it didn't matter: anything sounded good that night, and everything got us moving. The Adolescents ripped through the El Rey, coming back on stage for an encore of "I Hate Children" after management tried to end the show. The Adolescents truly proved why they are punk-rock greats.

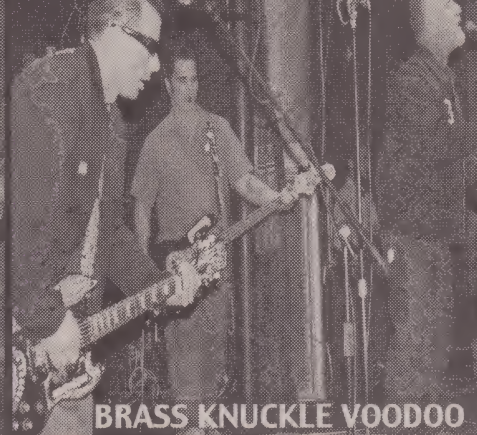
THREE BAD JACKS



ELVIS WESLEY AND...



BRASS KNUCKLE VOODOO



Three Bad Jacks Brass Knuckle Voodoo Elvis Wesley and the Pistol Whippers Jake G and the Gravediggers

January 7, 2006 @ Gaiaxy Theatre (Santa Ana, CA)

By Marcos "the Pomp" Nevarez

I'm tired of bands that suck Demented Are Go's cock. I like psychobilly, but I don't think that every band has to copy them. Jake G and the Gravediggers were the typical psycho band that would open wide for old Spark, and you could hear the slurps as they played through their set.

Thankfully, Elvis Wesley and the Pistol Whippers hit the stage hard with their brand of punk-inspired psycho that got the kids wrecking. In the middle of their set, they started a river-dance wrecking pit with their song "One Man's Mystery". The pit was a flurry of legs and fists, as psychos started wrecking and river dancing in mass hooligan chaos. Elvis Wesley pumped out some of the craziest psycho, Irish drinking songs that any Pat or Patty would hit the bottle to. Leaving the Emerald Isle behind, Elvis and the boys returned to frenzied, punk-driven psychobilly. As they closed, guitarist, Jesse James stuck his last power chord of the night and swung his guitar over his head, leaving a trail of feedback as the band left the stage.

Brass Knuckle Voodoo had their fans, but after a while bluesy rock starts to sound the same. Cory Davis worked the guitar, at times gnawing on that six string like a rabid wolf on a baby deer. Their hard rendition of "Folsom Prison Blues" with guest vocalist Eddie from Hellbound Hayride was also a treat, but towards the end of their set all I could think of was fucking the girl in front of me. As I looked around, I could tell that other people had also lost interest. As people began to sit on the

dance floor, I returned to my daydream to what seemed to be the same song playing over and over again.

The Galaxy was in a stir as Three Bad Jacks took the stage. Opening up with "Run Johnny Run", Elvis and the boys started things off right, as a pit broke out and people began to rush to the front of the stage. With their hard-driving rockabilly sound, Three Bad Jacks effortlessly slapped out song after song. I never thought that anyone could wreck to Cheap Trick, but somehow Three Bad Jacks pulled it off, and the pit reached a feverish point to "I Want You to Want Me". Getting sing-alongs going and exciting the audience whenever they approached the front of the stage, the band commanded the audience. Yet they were grateful for their fans, taking a break from the music to reminisce about recording their demo in a living room and thanking the fans to help them get where they are today. Returning to the music, they dedicated their song "Tell Me Why" to George W. Bush and did a rendition of "Great Balls of Fire" for Elvis Presley before closing on their signature song, "Made of Stone".

THE POLITICIANS THE HUDSON DRAGS CIVET THE UNWANTED GUESTS

January 7, 2006 @ Club Roc
(Costa Mesa, CA)

My first show review of 2006 proved to be for a night of great punk rock at a cool bar in Costa Mesa. The lineup featured the all-female punk-rock outfit Civet, rockers The Hudson Drags, and upbeat Orange County punks The Politicians headlining the gig. Well, there was an opening band by the name of The Unwanted Guests, but unfortunately, I was a little late, so I missed their set.

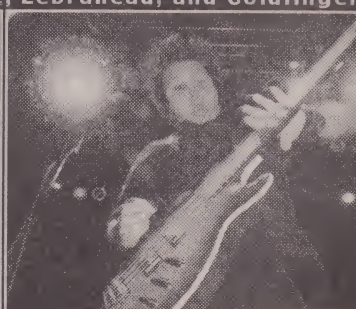
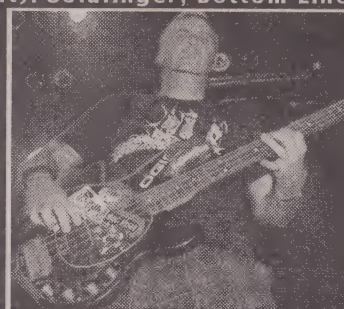
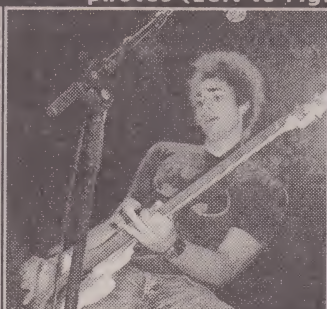
Civet was blasting through their set as I entered the venue. It's great to see a group of hot ladies onstage creating blistering punk music with a melody. Now, don't get me wrong: these voluptuous vixens have melody in their music, but they are certainly not a group of

poppy punk girls; they have more of an aggressive sound similar to The Distillers—which is definitely a good thing. The four-member group had incredible musicianship and superb stage presence, chatting with the crowd in between songs. If you are a fan of gritty punk rock with an evil woman's touch, you should check them out. For more information on the band and to get a copy of the group's latest album, *MAS-SACRE*, check out www.civetgirls.com.

Civet thought The Politicians were the next band up, but instead it was The Hudson Drags, punks with a poppy rock edge. The band seemed to be completely in their element at Club Roc. One of their distinctive features is the band's vocalist, Chris, who has a high-pitched voice which stands out over the punk guitar riffs and pounding drum beats. The Hudson Drags got the crowd to nod their heads with the upbeat "Girl" and then wound things down with the slower-paced "Days Go". It was a strong set, and I would recommend checking them out next time they play. To find out about their next show or get a copy of their EP, head over to www.myspace.com/thehudsondrags. With the booze flowing heavily around the bar,

The Politicians hit the stage. These Orange County punks with a melodic and upbeat edge played a stellar set with songs mostly coming from their EP, *WELCOME TO THE WAR*. While on stage, the members asked for some shots, and friends brought up clear ones. Then this girl in the front row runs to the bar and brings up some shots that were bright red. I don't think it was *Kool-Aid*, because the guys seemed to get a little bit more upbeat after that. Aside from the drinking, the band played an awesome set full of upbeat rockers "Time Is Runnin' Out" and the EP's title track. A great part of the set was when the band played the amazing "Accordion Song" and the guys were joined on stage by a guy decked out in Irish clothing who played the accordion. Even though they were a bit intoxicated, they did not miss a beat and played an incredible set. The crowd was going wild, and it was great to see, as this band has been playing consistently for a few years now. If you're a fan of The Clash and old Green Day, you should like The Politicians. You must check them out the next time they play; and you need to get a copy of *WELCOME TO THE WAR*. For more information, cruise to myspace.com/thepoliticians.

photos (Left to right): Goldfinger, Bottom Line, Zebrahead, and Goldfinger



BOTTOM LINE ZEBRAHEAD GOLDFINGER

January 13, 2006 @ The House of Blues,
(Anaheim, CA)

Photos and text by Todd Markel

Maybe I'm getting old, but I find it hard to believe that it's been five years since the House of Blues in Anaheim opened its doors. To commemorate the occasion they had three top-notch shows scheduled over the weekend beginning with tonight's Friday the 13th show.

My perfect timing had me walking in, just as the opening band Josephine, was finishing up their set. Up next, voted the best punk band in Cincinnati, Bottom Line. Recently signed to Maverick Records, they were pretty excited as they had just submitted their finished CD to their label for approval that day. Bottom Line put on a high-energy, pop punk show with catchy songs, but for the most part the crowd didn't seem that into them. They stood pretty much motionless with arms crossed and applauded politely after each song. They introduced a new song called "For the First Time" that will be on their new CD and also played a song that was co-written with John Feldmann of Goldfinger called "Train Wreck".

Zebrahead came on to the cheers of their devoted fans. They started with "Rescue Me" from 2003's CD, *MFZB*. After losing long time singer, Justin last year, some may have predicted the demise of Zebrahead. But with new lead singer Matty Lewis and a new CD on the

way called *BROADCAST TO THE WORLD* they are ready to prove that they are still strong as ever and that their fans are sticking by them. Multi-talented Jason Freese, fresh off of a yearlong stint playing with Green Day was helping out on keyboards and horns. From their soon to be released CD they played a song called "Anthem" which had everyone jumping around. A high point was a choreographed moment when Matty and Ali, (the rapper of the group) both gave each other high-fives and then dove in unison into the crowd. After playing their hit "Playmate of The Year" they closed the set with "Set Up".

The lights dimmed and the curtain went up, with an air raid siren blaring, a voice came on the PA "Count down commencing, 10-9-8" suddenly someone appears on stage, "7-6" It's Charlie Paulson, Goldfinger's founding guitarist (who hasn't played in the band since 2001) "5-4-3" the voice continues, "2-1 Ignition!" The stage lights go full on and Goldfinger is on stage in all their glory, they immediately kick it off with "Spokesman" and the whole place goes wild. It's just like old times with Charlie spinning around all over the stage. "Counting the Days" from *STOMPING GROUNDS* is up next and John Feldmann confirms rumors that he has tore his ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) and was bravely playing in a knee brace. This handicap seemed nothing more than a minor inconvenience and it didn't seem to slow him down one bit. John announced that there is one thing different tonight than the last two times they played here and that one thing is so important to him that he could "Not say in words" and that one thing is Charlie "fucking" Paulson. They burst into an intense "Open Your Eyes" which made John dive right in to the crowd and float while singing "Wake up, wake up". It came to the point in the show where

fans are invited to come on stage for the sing-along of "Mable" and for the first time ever I was lucky enough to get on stage and jump around. They played a little ditty called "Fuck Ted Nugent" which is a cute song that some may find a tad bit critical of Ted and his outdated ways. Next up they played what I consider to be my theme song, the ever-popular "Superman". From *HANG UPS* they played "San Simeon" their ode to southern California living, which was another huge sing-along. They segued from "My Girlfriend's Shower Sucks" into the classic "Miles Away" with an explosive "How deep is your love? / How deep is the ocean?" About mid way in John introduces "Dangerous" Darrin Pfeiffer who comes out from behind the drums for his famous Twinkie stunt, only this time, instead of a Twinkie they used a Snickers bar. If you've never seen it, it's pretty disgusting. Darrin asks for the craziest motherfucker in the audience to come up on stage and they have to take a bite out of a Twinkie/Snickers bar that firmly lodged in Darrin's ass. Darrin removes what's left and eats it himself. Yeah pretty gross, but funny as hell. John said "Give it up for Darrin and his awesome ass" They played a reprise of "Miles Away" and performed their trademarked "guitars thrown around neck spin". Charlie jumped into the crowd for a frantic little crowd surfing as they finished the song and said good night. Most Goldfinger fans know that this is not how they leave a stage and an encore was eminent. Darrin reappeared on stage with a guitar and after informing us that the Snickers bar went a little too far into his bum, he played his love song to hockey great Wayne Gretzky. The entire band joins him on stage for "Questions" and they closed the night with "99 Red Balloons" and goosed stepped off stage.

FLOAT THE BOAT FESTIVAL: PEPPER FISHBONE VOODOO GLOW SKULLS CHAPTER 11 B-FOUNDATION THE BIG PILL NO BARE FEET OMINOUS THE PRICKS FIRST THE FALLEN

January 14, 2006 @ the Queen Mary
(Long Beach, CA)

By Marcos "the Pomp" Nevarez

Bros...bros...BROS! So many bros. As I walked into the Queen Mary a little after noon, I looked around and knew that I was going to have to start drinking early. Thankfully, each floor of the Queen Mary had a bar picked up a martini. I knew that this was going to be a long day.

First the Fallen were pure candy-bar blowjob. They were the typical high-school, "We wanna be cool and finally get chicks, so let's start a crappy hardcore band" losers. For a Snickers they would suck you off all night.

The Pricks brought a Beastie Boys-like hip-hop sound. (refreshing after the candy-bar boys). They kicked it off with their little homie screaming the Pledge of Allegiance. This kid was hilarious, bouncing around the stage like an excited dog. The rhymes were kind of weak, but I have to give props to DJ Vanessa, who put out some fly beats.

Continuing with the hip-hop, Ominous brought a sleek, smooth flow to the stage. With their lyrical rapping and sweet, female background vocals, Ominous had a groove that could get you slowly swaying. Supporting Operation Freedmind, a hip-hop movement that promotes unity, freedom, and expression, their message was reminiscent of Public Enemy. Their DJ could lay down a track, had skills scratching on the needles.

Now, if you can jump or clap your hands and you're into feeling good, No Bare Feet is the band for you. With their boy-band-like antics and catchy riffs, the front rows eagerly anticipated their next cue to jump or clamp their hands like a child on Christmas morning waiting to open a gift. I couldn't help but laugh as everyone jumped in unison.

I had expected nothing but the worst bro music Southern California had to offer, but so far it was tolerable. Then, The Big Pill came and rocked like fuck! (I'm not sure where this phrase came from, but "rock like fuck" is the highest rating that I can give to any band.) Complete with horns, two percussionists, and a DJ, The Big Pill mixed funk, punk, ska, hip-hop, and a variety of other genres to create one of the best sounds that I've heard in a long time. With sweet vocal harmonies, hilarious rap, and astounding solos by everyone in the band, The Big Pill is doing their own thing—and sounding good doing it.

Just as I thought that things were starting to take off, they immediately came crashing back down with B-Foundation. They started off with a bluesy sound check...and it's a sad thing when your sound check is the better than your set. They were simply a Sublime rip-off, playing that slow, white-guy reggae, which the bros lapped up like honey. As I looked around, I saw a group of kids sleeping in the corner and knew that it was time to start drinking again.

Chapter 11 was a slight improvement, with a soft-rock steady beat and smooth sax; but after a while it all sounded the same. As the set went on, I was more interested in the roll of toilet paper that started flying around and the drunk father dancing with his teenage daughter and her friends. Someday I too look forward to embarrassing my kids by getting drunk and trying to grind up against a bunch of hot, underage ass. I salute you, sir.

When Voodoo Glow Skulls started up, I was

happy to finally see a decent pit. With a driving ska-core sound, they pumped out the ska as only they can. Going into the pit was like trying to dance on wet ice, but the fact that bros don't know how to skank only made me more determined. As the pit grew, security became increasingly annoying, interrupting the set and threatening to stop the band. If they were worried about a few kids skanking and bros flying around, I would hate to see a punk show at the Queen Mary.

With things starting to take off again, Fishbone started off with a cool jazz, spoken-word improv soundcheck that put half of the bands that night to shame. Switching up from ska to rock to jazz and hip-hop, Fishbone got the people crowd-surfing and moshing. With the listeners in a feverish excitement and toilet paper and paper towels flying through the air, things got even crazier when singer Angelo Moore started stage-diving. Again, security kept threatening to stop the band, and they eventually cut the power to the stage. But Fishbone continued to play and closed their set without mics.

As Fishbone closed, I suddenly realized that I was surrounded. Bros to the left of me, bros to the right of me, the entire bottom of the ship filled with them—all anticipating the start of Pepper. As fat, middle-aged white guys started to rap, I was confused as to why the bros were so excited. A sidenote to the band: DON'T LET YOUR ROADIES PERFORM ON STAGE! After realizing that this horrible display wasn't the band, I was relieved...until I heard Pepper. If I thought some of the bands that night sucked Sublime's cock, Pepper would let Sublime double-fist them elbow-deep while sucking cock and giving handjob while being fucked in the ear. All of the intros to their songs were note-for-note rips from other bands you would find on KROQ. I had had a long day and couldn't take any more of this shit. I left a few songs into their set and began climbing to floor level, shouting to the bros along the way to stop encouraging this audio diarrhea. Thoroughly enraged by the time I got to the top, I politely eased my way in between some bro hoers. Then, with a MIGHTY RAGE, I leaned over the banister, saw the guitarist leaning back to exaggerate an uninspired guitar solo, AND I SPAT. I watched as the glistening glob of hatred and disgust fell like blue ice from an airplane and covered the guitarist's chest. The bros and bro hoers who had witnessed my act looked in disgust, but what had just happened needed to be done.



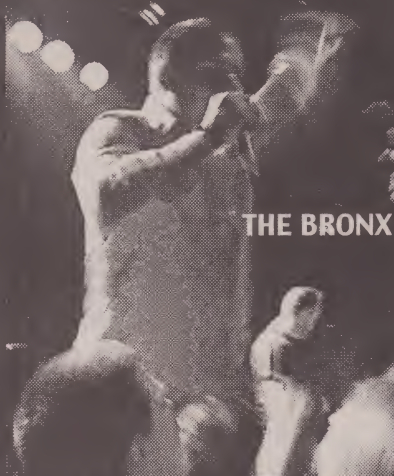
PEPPER



FISHBONE



THE BRONX



HIGH ON FIRE



BURNED INSIDE



HIGH ON FIRE THE BRONX BIG BUSINESS BURNED INSIDE

January 19, 2006 @ the Troubadour
(West Hollywood, CA)

By Jasten King

Oh, bands these days. You can't label them, they don't label themselves, and sometimes they're simply indescribable. I thank God I never took the career path to be a venue booker, 'cause it's damn near impossible to put together a bill with similar bands these days, as their diversity seems to increase all the time. This was exemplified tonight when four very different bands took to the stage at the sold-out Troubadour.

After waiting in one line forever to pick up my ticket, then another line to simply get in, I finally caught the tail end of Burned Inside. Stacking the stage with a ton of amps, the dark, thick shredding of their very metal sound was nearly deafening—just as music like this should be. Banging their heads in time to the pounding near-jams matched with a heavy growl,

this band may be a little easier to label; and I bet it's definitely something that will soon garner a large fan base.

Next up was Big Business from Seattle. Simply bass and drums, these two guys seem to be making a music category all their own. Having toured with bands such as The Blood Brothers, this band seems to be getting bigger every day and leaving every A&R guy who comes to see them a little confused, seeing as there's obviously no "hit single." Cody Willis (formerly of Murder City Devils) stands out as a madman on the drums, while Jared's bass and vocals makes every song something unlike the last. Maybe this wasn't exactly their crowd, but everyone attending certainly stayed to check them out—and were won over.

Finally, hometown heroes of The Bronx began their first local gig in what seems like forever. Spending the last several months writing and recording a long-awaited new album, the band started what will probably be a couple years of straight touring. Though not the last band of the night, the majority of the crowd was obviously there to see just them. The Bronx recently played a smaller gig at Anaheim's favorite dive, Linda's doil Hut, as well as a bigger gig opening for Bad Religion just a couple days prior; but this was more the night for their hometown fans to get up close and personal...and to rock the fuck out. From

the first notes, the crowd went nuts, moshing and singing along with every song. With guitarist Joby's insane amp volume and singer Matt's intense screaming vocals, every song, new and old, was perfect in-your-face rock 'n' roll, which is hard to find these days and which has already made this band a big name in a short time. Tonight's gig showed that even when on a bill with much "heavier" bands, they stand out as being something very powerful and special.

Last for the night was High on Fire. Straight out of Oakland, this band has built a large fan base in the rather narrow music category of metal. Their slightly more rock 'n' roll take on a very metal sound has gotten this three-piece outfit a great deal of attention and sold-out shows. Signed to Relapse Records and playing showcases like SXSW, this tour is simply one more step to making them an even bigger success. Playing to a packed house, their fans held their spots close to the stage and nodded their heads right along with every song. With some impressive six-string work from singer/guitarist Matt Pike and a steady rhythm from bassist Joe Preston and drummer Des Kensel, tonight's show seemed to be quite satisfying to the fans who came for them—and also seemed to win over those who came to see the opening acts. High on Fire delivered the show they came to do.



(THE SOUNDS OF) KALEIDOSCOPE
FROM WHERE YOU WERE TO HOW YOU GOT THERE
HACKSHOP

The music of (The Sounds of) Kaleidoscope precisely matches the band's name, because this is kaleidoscopically psychedelic rock. But there are slight variations on this form throughout. "Certain Colour Sky" is breezy in a The Church sort of way, while "Suite T" is kind of creepy. Then there are tracks that avoid psychedelica almost altogether. "New Language", for instance, sounds a whole lot like 1983 synth rock, and "Funny Cigarette" rocks like early Beatles records. Lyrically, it's hard to get a good feel for what this band is talking about. It says cryptically during "Oh My Mind", "Pretend that you don't know my name." Much like actual kaleidoscopes, this music is packed with multiple colors, which continually change shape. That's a high compliment, indeed. -Dan MacIntosh



A LIFE ONCE LOST
HUNTER
FERRET

If I'd written this review upon my initial spin of this album, it probably wouldn't be pretty, with the lone standout track being the excellent instrumental. That hasty opinion would be a shame, though, for this metallic hardcore band lay claim to majorly heavy, ripping riffage; crushing drum work; and obvious skill. The drawback? The vocals. Now, I LOVE rough, abrasive vocals, but those of Robert Meadows weren't doing it for me. However, we reviewers (the responsible ones, anyway) don't simply judge after one listen, and following a few more spins, I started to "get" Meadows's style, which markedly changed my view of ALOL. I'm still not sold completely, but undoubtedly fans of the band are digging the roaring thunder of HUNTER. -Janelle Jones



A PERFECT MURDER
STRENGTH THROUGH VENGEANCE
VICTORY

With the release of 2004's brutal UNBROKEN, A Perfect Murder firmly cemented their place as one of this reviewer's favorite Victory bands. The Quebec-based five-piece's blend of thrash, hardcore, and Southern sludge with nary a clean vocal was, quite frankly, mesmerizing. Then the band's future was in limbo, with three members quitting, leaving masterminds Carl Bouchard (guitar) and Yan Chausse (drums) to ponder APM's fate. Luckily, they forged on, and with new guys (including vocalist Kevin Randel, a Nashville native) and armed with an even more metal edge, they've produced a great follow-up in STRENGTH THROUGH VENGEANCE, a record comprising 10 searing metallic bruisers and (as with UNBROKEN) one awesomely moving, slow instrumental ("Time Changes Nothing"). Hopefully, they'll keep this one-brilliant-instrumental-an-album trend alive in the years to come. -Janelle Jones



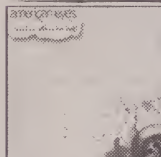
AFS
TALES OF A DRUNKEN GENERATION
STRANDED/VOLTAGE

Arthritic Foot Soldiers the name says it all: these guys don't take themselves too seriously. I applaud that. AFS have fun with their quick, hard-charging punk that's crafted (mainly) into energetic, one-minute bursts. Coupled with sardonic, witty lyrics covering everything from Bush ("Somewhere in Texas, there's a village without its idiot" (from "Texas Idiot")) to annoying/pushy Bible-brandishing retards ("God Squad") and the need for sterilizing some of the populace ("Gene Pool"). Still, their best songs musically have to be the harder, heavier ones (e.g., the awesome "Skate to Live", "Hammer to the Head", "Texas Idiot"). Closer "Last One" is both the most aptly-titled (it's actually ABOUT being their last song) and the disc's most earnest-sounding (plus, it's got the great line: "We're all off down the pub to see The U.K. Subs"). -Janelle Jones



ALLISTER
BEFORE THE BLACKOUT
DRIVE-THRU RECORDS

It all sweet smells and puppy dog tails as we track through the latest effort from Chicago-based Allister. I was only semi-impressed with their last album, LAST STOP SUBURBIA, and was hoping for something a bit less poppy, but it seems things are destined to stay the same. BEFORE THE BLACKOUT offers a mix of very catchy songs laced a bubblegum pop-punk feel. Fans of the pop-punk genre will be quite happy with this album, but I suggest staying away if you are looking for something with balls and grit. This is just a little bit too sweet for my liking. -Matt Edmund



AMERICAN EYES
NEVER TRUST ANYTHING THAT BLEEDS
SIDEONEDUMMY

These kids went to the same Los Angeles high school that shat members of Incubus, Hoobastank, and Linkin Park into existence...but I guess you can't hold that against them. NEVER TRUST ANYTHING THAT BLEEDS is the band's debut and proves them to be a solid, poppy rock band. Besides kick-starting a career with a show in one of West Hollywood's gay clubs and getting Tears for Fears bassist Curt Smith to do guest vocals, American Eyes also know how to pen some songs that fit comfortably into the Warped Tour and Hot Topic crowds. It's definitely not my thing, but if that's what you get down with, then you'll be pretty happy with this release. -David Barker



BEDLIGHT FOR BLUE EYES
THE DAWN
TRUSTKILL

Trustkill Records is probably the label you go to for the kind of music you can rely on to destroy things to, so it comes as some surprise that BEDLIGHT FOR BLUE EYES, for all intents and purposes, a rock band and one that leans to the softer side of things, to boot-resides here. While the New Jersey quintet's music is a bit on the fashion rock/Warped Tour side of the fence, the deal-breaker here is the massive vocal range and talent supplied by lead throat Christian. He croons; he hits Jeff Buckley's, Chris Cornell's, and Geoff Rickley's ranges with relative ease. His dynamic AOR voice may make your mom fall in love with rock music again (if she fondly remembers Styx and Journey). Expertly recorded and mastered and loaded with the anthems by Audioslave if they were not so left-wing or Steelheart if they had bigger testicles, THE DAWN is a 10-track album laden with hard-rock balladeering disguised in a pop-punk wrapper...yet there's something delectable about it all that fans of arena rock from Boston to Creed will surely gush over. www.trustkill.com -Mike SOS



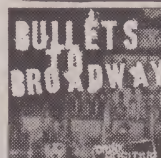
BLARE BITCH PROJECT
DOUBLE DISTORTION BURGER
STEEL CAGE RECORDS

The stereotype that women are inferior in the realm of rock is frustrating. It's similarly depressing when a female-fronted band releases a record that kicks rock 'n' roll right in the machismo but is written off as a novelty. DOUBLE DISTORTION BURGER, the debut by Blare Bitch Project, could be considered one such CD. Frontwomen Blare N. Bitch and Punky-with their husky voices (like two laryngitic Joan Jett's)-and the bluesy, ballys licks firing from their Les Pauls are the band's fierce focal points. On songs like "Catch Me" and the riff-laden "Runnin' Outta Time", their presence and tenacious attitudes are undeniable assets. Though escaping the public's pigeonholing inclinations may be a burden, it's clear that Blare Bitch Project's rebellious brand of hard-rock is no novelty. -Dane!



BRAVO FUCKING BRAVO
ALONE RECORDS

Unless you a morning person and/or severely addicted to a.m. caffeine binges, don't even bother trying this album before noon: your eyes will bleed and you will become an anxious, nervous wreck. After the a.m. ends and the sun lights the way of day, you may find that BFB's senseless barking has become inspirational-but only if you listen like you look at abstract art. There is some serious firepower here, without question. Unfortunately, there is some slightly annoying repetitiveness in the choruses. Chanting the same cliché over and over does not make for a compelling anything (unless your band is called Rage Against the Machine). -Thomas Murray



BULLETS TO BROADWAY
DRINK POSITIVE
RED SCARE RECORDS

Formed from the ashes of Teen Idols comes Bullets to Broadway, a five-piece pop-punk act that combines slick vocal harmonies with a gritty punk rock sound. Produced by Less Than Jake's Roger Lima, this EP provides eight super catchy tunes that are enhanced by the shared vocals of Kevin and Heather creating a truly unique sound. While it could be taken as a bad sign that the best track is a reworking of The Go-Go's "The Whole World Lost Its Head", it doesn't take away from how good this EP is. The only complaint I have is that they should have sucked it up and written four or five more songs and released a full-length. -Jeff Strack



CALL IT ARSON
SELF-TITLED
KILL NORMAL RECORDS

It's a real pain in the ass when a band chooses the wrong time to be loud during a song. Call It Arson is guilty of this on their latest effort. It is during this album that we hear a band that has a world of potential but blows it away by loud guitar riffs that don't fit in certain songs. Perhaps the best track on this album is "Butterflies Rape the Sound", a beautiful mix of emotional vocals and dreamy percussion and guitars. But "I Know Me" starts off mellow, then out of nowhere, heavy guitars are thrown into the mix, which ruins the song. Call It Arson has a niche that they should stick to: mellow indie rock. -Matt Edmund



CAVE IN
PERFECT PITCH BLACK
HYDRA HEAD

Cave In rose from the Boston underground to major-label disaster. Now the band is coming full circle with the 10-track PERFECT PITCH BLACK, which finds the quartet juxtaposing its crushingly heavy sounds of yesterday with the savvy songwriting they fine-tuned while on tour with Foo Fighters. Songs like "Paranormal" brilliantly combine the shimmer of Oasis and U2 with the dastardly hardcore of Converge; while the album's top track, the ass-shaking "Trepanning", puts the pedal to the metal and boogies like Sabbath meets Soundgarden at a COC gig. Perhaps radiating the most perfect blend of heavy and melodic ever, PERFECT PITCH BLACK is a must-have for any self-respecting rock fan. www.hydrahead.com -Mike SOS



CHARLEY HORSE
UNHOLY ROLLER
ACETATE RECORDS

What do you get when you mix members of Throwrag, The Cramps, and Blood Junkies and ex-members of Nashville Pussy, and Berlin? You get one bad-ass Charley Horse that's sure to be black and blue for years from these talented greasers. This could be the perfect psychobilly lineup. But with all the side projects, when will the band get a chance to tour? Sean "Zezo" Williams belts out some sinister vocals to tasteful rockabilly backing on these 10 tracks. The CD even contains a video for the tune "Bad Ass Dad". The rockabilly and psychobilly scene is flooded with sound-alike and look-alike bands that tend to dilute the market. Leave it to some pros like Charley Horse to show the others how to make it fresh. -Dug

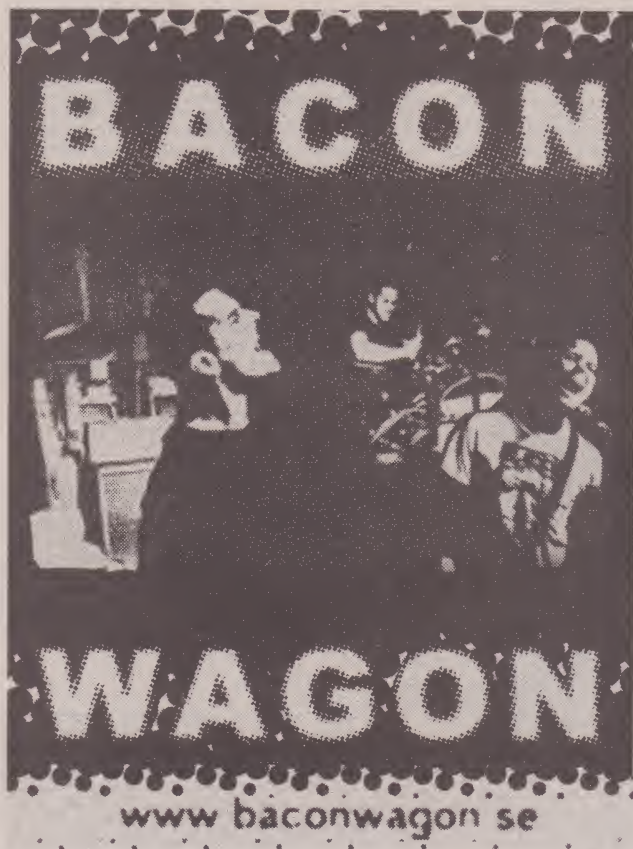


DEVILDRIVER
THE FURY OF OUR MAKER'S HANDS
ROADRUNNER

Formerly of nu-metal poster children Coal Chamber, vocalist Dez returns with a 20-ton vengeance with the quintet known as Devildriver. Dez and company's sophomore effort attacks metal with Swedish precision and a thrash attitude, culminating in 12-tracks of unrelenting heaviness. While some of the nu-metal gloss is still apparent, flurries of death-metal guitars heard on "Hold Back the Day", the undeniably crushing staccato riffs and rhythmic gallop of "Before the Hangman's Noose", and the build-up on caustic opener "The End of the Line" reveal a love of Euro metal, as well as a tip of the hat to the underground metal scene. Sounding similar to In Flames meeting mid-era Testament and produced by Colin Richardson, this disc is a metallic monster that's hard to ignore. www.roadrunnerrecords.com -Mike SOS



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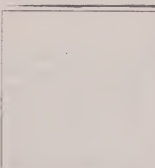
the new CD from The Proper Authorities featuring the songs "Devastate" and "Whodunit" is on sale now

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DOPE SMOOTHIE
GO STRIKE
ELITIST LOW BROW RECORDS

The sophomore release from these Seattle dopers is a strange foray into a musical world that reminds one more of a drag show than an actual album. Shoddy guitars pound out distorted melodies, as lead singer/provocateur Josh Bate launches into unsettling lyrics that go so far as to use a chorus line about a "stinky vagina." When the band plays slowly (e.g., "Cans", "Soft Gel"), the tunes are passable and the vocals not too bad; but as they speed up, they lose a lot of punch. At times, the band does break into a fair imitation of The B-52's, but more often than not this sounds like a really bad version of HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH. -Dug



E>K>U>K
AUTO EXPLODER
OTIK RECORDS

This is a short yet rewarding work. It's tough to find a worthy comparison to E>K>U>K. For instance, the start/stop guitar groove of "Kemo Thera" has some new wave in it. The track also features a high vocal that may remind you of The Futureheads. "Be More Robotic" sports screaming vocals and the lyrical question: "Can you be more robotic?" (and there's even a robotic electric guitar solo). AUTO EXPLODER is fairly chaotic rock, although "Bloodbath Aftermath" has a panicked lead vocal over a driving beat. At only five songs, this release is just not nearly enough of a good thing. Better still would have been a full-length of more of the same. Until then, hopefully this small sampling will hold you over. -Dan MacIntosh



EPHELE DUATH
PAIN NECESSARY TO KNOW
EARACHE RECORDS

My first impression was some kind of slow metal business with some "superhero preparing to dismantle a diabolical scheme" theme music in the background. Then we get sporadic yelps and screams, then back to the music. What the hell? Judging by the music, these three characters seem to be a tad mixed-up. The insert compares them to The Dillinger Escape Plan-high blasphemy in many arenas, but I guess I can see the similarities. This guy Fabio Fecchio slaps the absolute hell out of his bass, but he is no Les Claypool. I left my final listening of this album as a slightly less-confident and more-confused version of myself. -Thomas Murray



EUDORA
...AND IT RAINED MACHINES
SELF RELEASED

The singer of this band was Billy on THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS. (God, I wish I didn't know that. We all do now, don't we?) It's curious to me that the lyrics are not from first-person singular perspective but rather in the first-person plural: "us as a band" or "us as a scene". I'm not sure if that's because the band wrote them and not David Tom (Billy), but it doesn't matter. Listeners can identify and rally behind what the band is trying to convey. There is a deeper message that runs constantly: "Pick yourself up / We are all confused when we fall." The lyrics seem to take pleasure in the possibility of the listener understanding them. -Thomas Murray



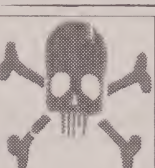
FALL RIVER
CHRONICLES
EMERALD MOON RECORDS

CHRONICLES is a common record amongst all the hardcore albums out there. While listening to this seven-track album, you can't help but wish the music had been taken further in order to make a fantastic record. Fall River fall short in many of their breakdowns, slowing down to a steady pace of boredom. Still, credit must be given to lead vocalist Allison Bellavance, who plays the role of hardcore singer very well. With only a few hints that a woman is barking lyrics, Bellavance proves her ability. -Luke



FENIX TX
PURPLE REIGN IN BLOOD
ADRENALINE MUSIC GROUP

Ah, the days of high school, when pop-punk didn't seem so sappy and I could relate to all the songs that these adults were writing. For some reason, the members of Fenix TX thought that a reunion show would be a good idea-and who is gonna pass up a chance to make some bank off of recording that event? Ignoring the stupid, immature banter from the band between songs, PURPLE REIGN IN BLOOD functions pretty well as a live album. The substance, though, is pretty sad. These guys have to be in their late 20s by now (at least), and singing about masturbating to Phoebe Cates or fantasies of threesomes should have been left in adolescence. -David Barker



FILM SCHOOL
FILM SCHOOL
BEGGAR'S BANQUET

San Francisco's Film School is making light-in-the-pants college music. The abstract sections seemed forced (though some of the chaos has the hint of authenticity). There is a certain beauty in some of the passages. I went from interested to bored to interested again. There was no consistency. The pose kept dodging in front of the focus of the thing. The disc is okay but falls into the category of discs I dig for seconds at a time and so would never put on. Go back to school. -H. Barry Zimmerman



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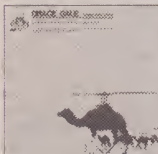
**FIVE CENT DEPOSIT
FOCUS ON THE NEGATIVE
RADICAL RECORDS**

It's time to bounce your head to yet another pop-punk act. This time we are featuring Five Cent Deposit's newest album, **FOCUS ON THE NEGATIVE**. I can't say too much about this release that will focus on positive aspects. We have 13 tracks of pop/rock set to a upbeat tempo. It's nothing great, nor is it the worst thing I have ever heard. It's mediocre music at best. Fans of bands like MxPx, New Found Glory, and Allister should find this amusing. Maybe I'm getting too judgmental at my old age of 24, but this kind of music gets on my nerves. This may please simpleminded teens who want to hear 20-something men sound like whiny crybabies, but I don't buy it. -Matt Edmund



**GO BETTY GO
NOTHING IS MORE
SIDEONE DUMMY RECORDS**

There is not a lot in this world hotter than an all-girl band who know how to play good rock 'n' roll. Take Go Betty Go, for example, four good-looking women who are holding their own in the rough and tumble music industry. With **NOTHING IS MORE**, these bombshells lay down 12 up-tempo tracks. "I'm from L.A." could be the modern-day version of the classic Frank and Moon Unit Zappa song "Valley Girl". Go Betty Go display a wide variety of musical styles and influences. There's a bit of ska and even a little Latin flavor with the song "No Hay Pardon". Although there are a lot of poppy tracks on this disc, its ever-changing sounds kept me intrigued the whole way through. -Matt Edmund



**GRACE GALE
A FEW EASY STEPS TO ENSURE HELI-CAMEL SAFETY
BLACKOUT! RECORDS**

Grace Gale initially present themselves as a mere metal-core act, tearing into lots of heavy breakdowns and technical riffage, the vocals veering back and forth between some pretty brutal screaming to some pretty irritating attempts at singing. I want to call it generic, but every time I get close to writing that word, the band does something that strikes me, whether it be the exceptional hardcore gang vocals in the first track (a song about wearing girls pants) or the humor found in the liner notes. The band are not that special, but they're proficient at what they're doing. Grace Gale should suit fans of Every Time I Die, The Program, and so on. -David Barker



**GRAVEYARD SHIFT
REST WITHOUT PEACE
DEAD BODY WRECKERDS**

The best song title of this bunch is one called "Dead Girls Are Easy". With its swaying, warm, and (dare I say it?) pretty arrangement, this is one sweet song. Still, its title is like something out of a David Lynch screenplay. For the most part, however, this CD features vocals that often sound a whole lot like Ian Astbury of The Cult. This is not surprising, because there isn't much difference-lyrically, at least-between gothic rock and the kind of psychobilly that Graveyard Shift creates. Gothic rockers look at death and then get all depressed about it. Psychobillyists, on the other hand, lash out at mortality in sarcastic anger. Instead of facing real-life relationships, dead girls just must be so much easier for these fellahs. -Dan MacIntosh



**HAYRIDE TO HELL
...AND BACK
HAIRBALL 8**

If you're longing for a hayride to hell, this band points out all of the Satanic tourist traps along the way. These stops include "Demon Seed", "Graveyard Romp", "She's My Witch", and "Death Dealer". There's nothing unique or distinctive about this band: it's the usual death and destruction you've come to expect from run-of-the-mill psychobilly outfits. Musically, this is little more than an unending cycle of punked-up rockability. You get the distinct impression that lyrical niceties are just not in this outfit's musical vocabulary and that they would rather act the psychobilly outlaw (something described in a song of the same name). Some folks just can't seem to wait to burn to death. Presumably, songs about death are also the simplest path on this hayride to hell. -Dan MacIntosh



**HE WHO CORRUPTS
THE SMELL OF MONEY
EUGENICS**

He Who Corrupts slice and dice though five tracks of aural madness, complete with unorthodox samples, grindcore instrumentation, and foreboding interludes. Displaying a sound technical background, as well as a sharp sense of sarcasm, tracks like "Your Mama on the Rocks" juggles jack-hammered rhythms with shards of whimsical lyrics, such as: "Just got a bone to pick with you sexual chocolate Catholics." Huh? Yep. And by the time you dissect that amongst the other phrases abrasively screamed at you, a thunderous breakdown (like the one on "Pain in the Tight Pants") destroys your senses. Then, poof-the CD is over. Short, sweet, and severe, this Chi-town treat turns up the heat and cranks out a whirlwind of mayhem. www.eugenicsrecordlabel.com -Mike SOS



**HEROS SEVERUM
PLAGUE DOGS
TWO SHEDS MUSIC**

With a name like Heros Severum, expect some pretty bizarre music. I wasn't ready for the eclectic sophomore release from this Athens, GA-based trio. Eric Friar, Sheryl Branch, and Davey Staton have something here...but nobody knows exactly what. With a sound that incorporates electric guitars, drums, horns, piano, and hand-clapping while eschewing bass guitar, the finished product is unique. Part Talking Heads, part Flying Lizards and a little Cake, this could be the ultimate college alternative disc. The vocal harmonies and hom melodies carry this music along at a brisk pace, and before you know it you'll be yelping and clapping and singing along with these weirdoes. This goes down as one of the freakiest and hippest albums of the year. -Dug



**HIMSA
HAIL HORROR
PROSTHETIC**

Decisively darker than previous efforts, Seattle outfit Himsa's latest offering exhibits the band's versatile approach to abrasive music. Hardcore's brevity and metalcore's fury collide head-on across the 10-track **HAIL HORROR**, resulting in tracks like the pummeling "The Destroyer", the classic metallic gloss of "Wolfchild" (which has hints of NWOBHM all over), and the very Gothenburg-esque metal of "They Speak in Swarms" (a track that could easily be mistaken for a cut by In Flames or The Haunted). Himsa has made an alarmingly crushing offering this time around, pulsating with pounding drums, frenetic guitars, and a guttural growl that puts the evil authority in the driver's seat. If you're craving triumphant tumultuousness, this quintet delivers in spades. www.prostheticrecords.com -Mike SOS



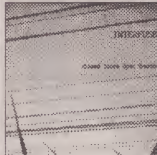
**IN ARCADIA
IF IT BLEEDS, WE CAN KILL IT
HANDSTAND RECORDS**

In Arcadia ranges from mediocrity to greatness in their first full-length album as a full band. IF IT BLEEDS, WE CAN KILL IT begins with some all-too-common pop-core that is ever so prevalent in music; but as the record continues, you get a better feel of what In Arcadia is capable of. Real emotional, driven rock is emitted from the instruments and passionate words are screamed by vocalist Joseph Enos (best exemplified in the sixth track, "Fathom the Brig'uns"). First impressions are everything in music. Luckily for In Arcadia, I continued to listen after track 1. -Luke



**INKED IN BLOOD
LAY WASTE THE POETS
FACEDOWN**

Portland residents Inked in Blood's debut full-length will have metalcore fans frothing at the mouth, as this quintet succinctly combine the wares of Zao, Killswitch Engage, Darkest Hour, and As I Lay Dying into 12 well-crafted songs. Bursting with emotion and chock full of masterful lyrics, these guys have been heralded as the next big thing-and with good reason. Despite playing within a saturated genre, **LAY WASTE THE POETS** has surpassed the rest of the bands by laying down some beautifully-mapped-out, poignant heavy music emblazoned with intelligence and fervor. www.facedownrecords.com -Mike SOS



**INTERFUSE
CLOSED DOORS OPEN TRACKS
TRAGIC END RECORDS**

With a sound that relies heavily on garage-quality equipment and garage-quality musicianship, the debut full-length from this Ohio quartet is a noisy, distorted mess. It's hard to imagine what this band has been doing with itself since its inception in 1999. It's too bad, because Interfuse is such a great name. Though it's always nice to hear a female lead vocalist, the mics are so distorted on this work that it is often hard to figure out who's singing. The 10 songs on this album are similar to the extreme, the only exception being the tune "So Jesus Walks into a Bar". It's not a great song, but it does remind me of that chorus "Jesus is just alright with me / Jesus is just alright..." -Dug



**IRONHEAD
LIVIN' LIKE WE WANNA DIE
IN WINE IS TRUTH RECORDS**

The debut release from this Virginia-based metal trio is a prime example of how aggressive, trashy metal should be played. With the intensity of Motorhead and the skill to write quick, catchy tunes à la The Ramones, this band will become a favorite of the metal, accessory-clad, and ripped-up T-shirt set. Johnny Sonic's fast and excellent guitar work is spot-on, and the addition of Angela Fox's angry backing vocals really sets the tunes apart. With dependable drumming from the dark-eyed Mark Metal, this band is too perfect for its own genre. It's almost as if some corporate suit was sitting there thinking, "Metalheads...Steelhead, Leadhead, Ironhead-THAT'S IT!" If that's the case, Sonic, Foxx, and Metal will have some explaining to do. Until then, this band rips it up good. -Dug



**KILLED BY THE BULL
KILLED BY THE BULL
DICK HARRIS RECORDS**

Upon hearing track 1, any music enthusiast would certainly be excited about Killed by the Bull. Unfortunately, the band couldn't sustain my enthusiasm for the album's entirety. "I, the Crooked Hero" is a true epic track that lasts nearly five minutes; but their press release misleads you into thinking this sort of magic will continue on the remaining tracks. If I had a choice, I would just download the first half of the album, leaving the remaining tracks to be lost in the vast wasteland that is the music industry. -Luke



**KOLA KOCA DEATH SQUAD
KOLA KOCA DEATH SQUAD
WIFE**

Ohio duo Kola Koca Death Squad take the template set forth by Local H and Death from Above 1979 and put a little White Stripes blues-jam action into its 13-track offering, resulting in some minimalist yet spirited rock tunes. "W.T.F." channels the bands of Stevie Ray Vaughn, while the slow crawl of "Trying to Remember" and the cowbell-induced groove of "Power Stroke" are reminiscent of arena rock circa 1976. Sounding like Violent Femmes crossed with Queens of the Stone Age (especially on the rumbling "Let's See"), this outfit may be small in numbers, but they sure do pack a plethora of grooves into their bag of tricks, making the listening experience enthralling throughout. www.wiferecords.com -Mike SOS



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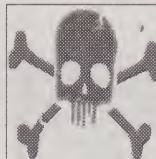
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LOS
BAD INTENTIONS ARE OFTEN HIDDEN BEHIND BEAUTIFUL GESTURES
SWEET REMEDY RECORDS

"All Over Again" is an apt introduction to BAD INTENTIONS. Los lead their listeners through the deep and troubled waters of their black and lonely souls with clichéd lyrics and simplistic, overdone themes. This Swedish band's sound, with its Euro metal-tinged guitars and earnest vocals, is unremarkable and solidly mediocre. "All I Ever Had" blends their sound and their "thoughts

of you" together into a strong closer you'll feel you've heard before-and you have heard, many times and with more depth. -Erika Owens



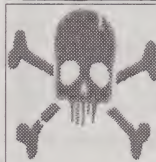
MARTHA BERNER
...THIS SIDE OF YESTERDAY
MACHINE RECORDS

Martha Berner's debut release is like a breath of fresh air on a stale and stultifying music scene. The Chicago-based chanteuse melds a perfect fusion of alt-country and indie-folk that touches the soul. Most compare her music to Tori Amos, though she really hits much closer to the old-school folk flavor of legends like Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez. Though she plays guitar, trumpet, harmonica, and percussion on this disc, Berner also is wise enough to bring in a wealth of talented musicians to round out this sound. "A Town Called Happiness" should be an instant classic, with all the hooks and haunting lyrics a song could ever hope for. Fans of Jack Johnson or The Jayhawks will love this fabulous new artist. -Dug



MILLER
COMPLETE BUFFOONERY
FRED'S CRACK RECORDS

Oh, God, help us all! Miller is a sign of the apocalypse in music. COMPLETE BUFFOONERY is shitty pop-punk, with all its immature, infamous vocal whining and repetitive riffs, chorus, and lyrics (which they consider humorous but in actuality is so terrible that I just vomited my lasagna all over my keyboard) infiltrating the electronic, synth-pop genre. For example, "I never mastered anything / Like masturbating" and the BRILLIANT "I don't know what to do / I have one leg / And an extra shoe / What the fuck am I going to do / I have one leg and an extra shoe." Forgive me if my funny bone doesn't work in this case. As far as music, the use of vintage synths and doo-dads is somewhat attractive, with playful melodies and an overall bright feel. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



MONREL VS. CODE 4-15
SPLIT
FOND OF LIFE RECORDS

Get ready to rumble, as Monrel and Code 4-15 bring you this hard-hitting eight-song split album. Both bands pull no punches when it comes to slamming out some good punk rock. Monrel starts off the disc with four songs packed with melodic-yet-hard sounds all the way from Germany. Santa Barbara's own Code 4-15 finishes off the disc. I did enjoy "My Baby's Crazy", with its humorous lyrics and bouncy feel. Both bands belt out some good, quality punk rock that makes this disc a surprising success. In the end, the winner of this battle of the bands is you, the listener. Now, defend that title and pick up this album! -Matt Edmund



MUTE
SLEEPERS
MILK & COOKIES RECORDS

Mute are a Canadian skate-punk trio who should be warmly received by those of you who would welcome a blend of Strung Out's technical precision; the poppiest sides of Inspection 12; and early Slick Shoes, Ten Foot Pole, and Craig's Brother. Mute do nothing particularly special or inventive, but they're adept in playing their instruments, and the songs are catchy enough. Really fast, unrelenting punk rock is what you get on SLEEPERS, with plenty of melody and some impressive guitar work. They totally would have fit on Fat Wreck Chords a few years ago (i.e., before that label started signing bands that were really distinct). Not to slight Mute, but like I said, this has been done plenty of times before. -David Barker



NO TURNING BACK
RISE FROM THE ASHES
BRIDGE NINE

Dutch hardcore mavens No Turning Back were undoubtedly weaned on NYHC stalwarts Sick of It All, Madball, and Warzone, as is evident on the band's latest full-length release. Exuding a tough-guy stance and complementing it with chugging riffs found on the title track and the sneering delivery of "Poisoned Tongues", No Turning Back's sturdy hardcore approach will nudge you into throwing on your wifebeater and throwing a few windmills around the living room in no time. www.bridge9.com -Mike SOS



OBITUARY
FROZEN IN TIME
ROADRUNNER

Seminal death-metal mavens Obituary have returned with a new album, the quintet's first in nearly seven years. FROZEN IN TIME is the name of the 10-track collection, and the title truly reflects the mindset of this release. Sticking to the same formula of slow, grinding grooves, insane solos, tortured vocal screams, and mid-paced metal madness, this Florida fivesome has stuck to their roots so well that, after a listen to this album, you'll swear that they never took a sabbatical. Displaying the same ferocity and level of decimation as on previous works, this album will knock you back to the early '90s in fine form. www.roadrunnerrecords.com -Mike SOS



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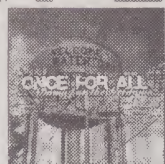
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ONCE FOR ALL DOWN FOR THE GETDOWN HARVEST EARTH

Midwestern hardcore quartet Once for All embody the tough-guy hardcore persona over 10 tracks of searing breakdowns, angst-ridden yowls, and simple yet effective guitar chugging. With obvious influence by Madball and the harder bands in the genre, this quartet blasts through songs with unbridled intensity, while staying true to the spirit of the music. By no means are Once for All reinventing anything, but they do a fine job of emulating their heroes while putting a hometown spin on their brand of aggression. www.harvestearth.com -Mike SOS



ORIGINAL BOOTY BURGLARS BURGLELINE UP EP SELF-RELEASED

The word "original" just doesn't fit when it comes to Original Booty Burglars. That's because there's nothing original about this band's juvenile musical rants. This group is solely about eating, drinking, and being merry. They obviously like to drink ("Drink Some Whiskey"), as well as smoke pot ("Schwang Weed Resin"). Oh, and they also think a lot about sex ("Dope Ass Body"). This work would be entirely unlistenable and it is almost complete trash were it not for musical variety. Reggae is touched upon in "Dope Ass Body", and blues elements are applied to "Rockin' All Night". This release has the overall effect of hanging out with fourth-graders who don't know any better than to make fart jokes and just what's so original about that? -Dan MacIntosh



PAPER BULLETS SELF-TITLED EAR FLAW RECORDS

Watch out for those Paper Bullets. First, there is the unsettling cover art. Licking a bald head? Yick! Then there are the "razor blades in wrappers" introduced in opener "Trick or Treat". Halloween references in dated punk with a rockabilly edge? Never! What follows is the even more base and blatant "Do it to Me" and "You Fucked Me". With such knowing crassness, Paper Bullets close with the defensive declaration to "Censor My Asshole". Censorship isn't necessary, but how about a little tact or originality? That would go a long way. -Erika Owens



QUIT YOUR DAYJOB SELF-TITLED BAD TASTE RECORDS

You couldn't have picked a better band name or label, because this album was made entirely in bad taste. What's featured on this disc from this odd Swedish act are eight songs in which each song title is repeated over and over again with a synthesized beat. It is as though they shot for something along the lines of Devo meets Talking Heads but fail miserably. I will admit that the effort in trying something totally odd and different gets Quit Your Dayjob an A for effort, but this album comes off as nothing more than a gag album. It may be time for the members of Quit Your Dayjob to start looking for another profession. Nice try, guys! -Matt Edmund



RACEBANNON THE INEVITABLE: SINGLES AND RARITIES (1997-2005) ALONE RECORDS

The title pretty much sums it up. These two discs/29 songs cover all those hard-to-find tracks from Racebannon, be they from various compilations, splits, demo takes, or simply previously unreleased. Nirvana's "Oh, the Guilt", Sonic Youth's "Death Valley '69", and Black Sabbath's "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath" get the cover treatment; and "Baby Gokuo Goes to Hell" is listed as the first track Racebannon ever created. THE INEVITABLE is a solid addition to the record collection for all fans of noisy, manic hardcore. -David Barker



RESIDENT GENIUS/HOWARD ZINN YOU CAN'T BLOW UP A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP THICK RECORDS

Welcome to another installment of good ideas gone wrong! This month's example is the split LP by punk act Resident Genius and professor/political activist Howard Zinn. While this seems like the perfect way to introduce new people to the brilliant teachings of Zinn, the main problem is that there is no real reason to listen to the band's music. Yes, it is political-which we all love-but musically it is on the border of alright and not too good. This probably would have been a brilliant move if the spoken word was mixed with a NoFX EP, but it isn't; so instead of picking up this album, pick up some of Zinn's books. Unlike Resident Genius, they will blow your mind. -Jeff Strack



RUSTY ANDERSON UNDRESSING UNDERWATER SURFDOG RECORDS

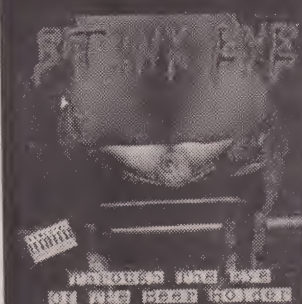
It was inevitable that Rusty Anderson would release an incredible solo album. After playing in Ednaswap and then as a backing guitarist for Paul McCartney, Elton John, Santana, Gwen Stefani, and Courtney Love, many considered him the ultimate studio musician. But rattling around in the back of Anderson's head was a world of music he was just dying to play. The stylish, alternative rock on his new disc is a pleasant alternative to the grunge most of today's bands spew out. Clear sound, brilliant vocals, and sizzling guitar riffs dominate this terrific album. Both McCartney and Stewart Copeland perform on this disc. I guess it says a lot about quality when a musician brings in a member of The Beatles and The Police as studio musicians on his own work. -Dug



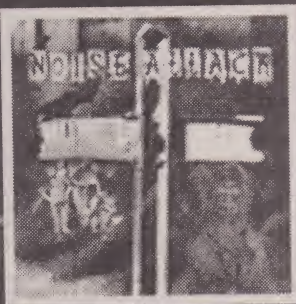
SABROSA PURR MUSIC FROM THE VIOLENT ROOM INK TANK

Sabrosa Purr is a sexy band. That feeling of want is in the energy underneath. Lead singer/axeman Will Love is leaning in on you. He'll get your girl hot if you can't. At the same time, MUSIC FROM THE VIOLENT ROOM is rocking, emotional, and beautiful. This is a great half-hour of music. There are absolutely no throwaway tracks on SONGS FROM THE VIOLENT ROOM. Sabrosa Purr is a band for tomorrow and tonight. Play it loud, and use protection. -H. Barry Zimmerman

RAUNCHY RECORDS



STINKEYE

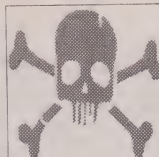


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SANGREE EVOLUTION IS NECESSARY FALLACY RECORDS

Sangree hits hard and they know it. Their Website proclaims that they sound like no one but themselves; and one guitarist goes so far as to thank "myself" three times in the acknowledgments. They may be cocky, but it's justified. The machine-gun double-bass and seizure-provoking guitar riffs rattle your chest, until a softer melody brings you down. The tempo shift is truly mean and abrasive-yet it somehow transitions smoothly. I noticed that I would pause every 30 seconds or so to cuddle with and gaze at my rental hooker, before a battle cry would send me back to the hair-pulling and the biting. My only objection is that the choruses seemed repetitive at times. That aside, this is one band you are sure to hear more from. -Jeffrey Waldman



SCHLEPROCK LEARNING TO FALL FIEND MUSIC

In the early 1990s, punk music hit the mainstream with the help of such Southern California acts as Bad Religion and The Offspring. Forgotten by the hype of commercial radio and MTV (when MTV didn't suck ass) was Schleprock. LEARNING TO FALL is essentially an autobiographical album following the band from conception to downfall. In 2002, guitarist Jeff Graham passed away due to a drug overdose, and in memoriam the band put together this collection of songs. It's obvious that this music was composed in the early '90s, as the lead vocals at times sound like Gavin Rossdale of Bush. This is a good collection of light-hearted rock tracks. This album is a true history lesson in Southern California rock history. -Matt Edmund



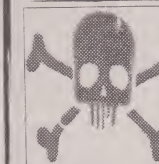
SCOTT "DELUXE" DRAKE THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN DIONYSUS RECORDS

When buried under a sea of shitty punk albums, it's always a pleasure for a reviewer to stumble upon something different. But calling the solo debut from former The Humpers frontman different wouldn't begin to explain how out of the ordinary this record is. Each song has its own distinctive sound, moving from punk to country to rockabilly to "I don't know what the hell to call this." While the lyrics are as off the wall as the music, this is a record for anyone who is open-minded and looking for something to challenge them. Scott "Deluxe" Drake may not sell a million albums or even 1,000, but he is obviously enjoying his musical freedom. For that, I salute him. -Jeff Strack



SCOTT REEDER TUNNEL VISION BRILLIANCE LIQUOR AND POKER

13 songs that sound a bit like Pink Floyd with a morbid mind, like someone telling you casually in a soft-spoken voice that they'd like to kill you. Huh? This guy Scott Reeder is apparently the social butterfly of the metal scene. Why have I never heard of him? He is responsible for or involved in multiple projects, especially in doom metal and desert rock. (I'd be lying if I said I knew exactly what that was, but I can tell you that it is more mellow and manageable than that weirdo Dungeons and Dragons crap.) I bet Tool listens to this guy-and not as a joke. -Thomas Murray



SECOND CLASS CITIZEN CONSPIRACY OF TRUTH SELF RELEASED

Now, THIS is how it's DONE. Connecticut's old-school hardcore punk Second Class Citizen bring it on their second album. The 11-track, 23-minute affair is crushing, gritty, tough, and undeniably powerful right from the get-go, showing that these guys are all about passion and know their roots. The press release says they play NYC often. I'm surprised and disappointed that I haven't seen 'em, 'cause I could totally envision them on a Sunday hardcore matinee show at CBGB. And if I were perchance in attendance but have no recollection of their performance, it's that damn booze's fault. Damn my drunk ass! Next time, I WILL be there. Yes, boys, you have my thorough endorsement. -Janelle Jones



SEVERE TORTURE FALL OF THE DESPISED EARACHE RECORDS

A so-so sounding death-metal album with fairly typical composition. Severe Torture is not breaking ground in any way. I did enjoy the occasional Megadeth-ish breakdown that the band throws in, but other than that, this is the barking and gurgling that you'll find in many of these Viking metal-inspired collections. It's almost to the point that with every metal disc I come across, I look immediately for the Hans, Bjorns, and Helmut...not that there is anything wrong with that. -Thomas Murray



SEX SLAVES BITE YOUR TONGUE RADICAL RECORDS

You know it's going to be a bad musical experience when the album cover depicts two chicks making out with their legs all tangled together. This is a cardinal rule, my friends: sex sells what the music cannot. The Sex Slaves' music could be described as Guns N' Roses meets Andrew W.K.-East Coast hard rock with sing-along lyrics. Musically, it's safe to say they have their shit together but lack what it takes to write meaningful lyrics. There is absolutely nothing inspiring about the music featured on this album. Another clone of something that's been done over and over again. Let's hope the music of Sex Slaves doesn't inspire a generation of musical clones. Oh man, we would be in trouble then, wouldn't we? -Matt Edmund

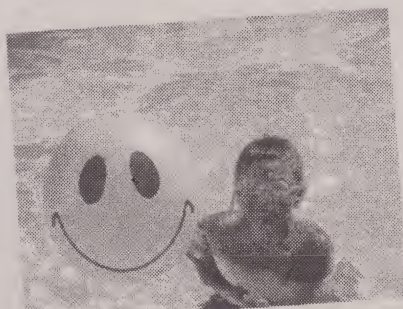


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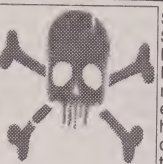
SHELL SHOCK
BORN TO KILL
PUKE N VOMIT RECORDS

"This is hardcore" is an audacious self-designation to make, especially by a band like Shell Shock. During their song "Declaration", though, they say this, claiming that they-and not those whining "emocore" wannabes-deserve such an eminent designation. Indeed, their 15-track debut, BORN TO KILL, is hardcore-punk epitomized: impatient tempos driven by an adrenalized drummer, growling guitars that travel predictable paths, and aggressive shouts that always sound antagonistic. The rhythms to which these words are roared seem repetitious, pausing (almost always) on the phrase's fourth beat, so each two-minute track is a rerun of the previous one. Though Shell Shock isn't tearing into any new territory, they're not trying to; they're simply loyal to their style, their sound, and (as "Good Job" suggests) music in general...unless it's "emocore." -Dane!



SHIRAGIRL
NOT SOLD IN STORES
PLAY-A-GRRRL RECORDS

Well, folks, I have reviewed some horrible albums in my time, but this one takes the cake. This female duo mixes hip-hop, punk, metal, and dance so poorly that I had to listen to it numerous times to confirm how truly awful it was. Shiragirl sounds like the Spice Girls if they thought they would make a comeback as a pseudo-punk act. The rapping plays like something the Olsen twins would have recorded when they were 13 and angry at their parents. As M.I.A. and Lady Sovereign work to take female-driven hip-hop to the next level, Shiragirl has caused it to revert back 20 years. You know what the worst part is? Tim Armstrong produces one of the tracks! If that isn't a sign of a coming apocalypse, I don't know what is. -Jeff Slack



SILENCE THE FOE
SWEET SWEET SUICIDE
LUJO RECORDS

I'm not one for much screamo in my daily diet of music, but this may change after listening to Silence the Foe's new album. This eclectic band from Norway describes their music as "happy hardcore." Although I don't know if I can say there is anything quite happy about the vocals of Anders Voldronning, I can say that I am "happy" with the musical content of this album. Most of my dislike for this kind of music is wrapped around the idea that the vocals drown out the instruments 90% of the time; but this is not the case with SWEET SWEET SUICIDE. This album is also a little over 20 minutes long, which is just enough to really grasp this band's genius without being overdone. Well worth checking out! -Matt Edmund



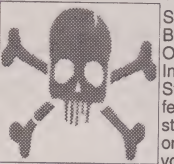
SIX FEET UNDER
DECADE IN THE GRAVE SAMPLER
METAL BLADE

Taking snippets from the four-disc/one-DVD box set, this 13-track disc highlights just a fraction of what it has to offer from this seminal death-metal band's most recent collection. Six Feet Under's decade-long career is chronicled on DECADE IN THE GRAVE with live cuts, rare demos, and (of course) all of the group's best-known works. Taking the Cookie Monster vocal to new levels courtesy of Chris Barnes and laying down some of the sickest death-metal grooves ever heard, if you have a mind for the macabre, this collection is worth the investment. www.metalblade.com -Mike SOS



SPUTTERDOLL
PIPE DOWN THE PIED PIPER
INCOMPLETE

Sputterdoll returns with a full-length endeavor laden with the same punk-infused garage rock that has made this female-fronted Bay Area outfit all the rage. Songs like "Dumb Dumb Girl" and "This Is Not an Anthem" retain the three-chord assault and straightforward musical output that overcomes your body and makes you wanna dance; while "Total Isolation" showcases the sneering vocals and overall jaded, punk-rock attitude prevalent on PIPE DOWN THE PIED PIPER. If you can't wait for The Distillers' new disc, Sputterdoll's most recent release will sufficiently hold you over. www.sputterdoll.com -Mike SOS



STIFFED
BURNED AGAIN
OUTLOOK MUSIC

In an attempt to bring back the sounds of the early punk days, Stiffed brings us BURNED AGAIN. On this 15-track disc, the female vocals of Santi White provides an interesting twist on the straight-ahead rock sounds Stiffed boasts. White's vocals border on a Gwen Stefani-like sound that more and more female vocalists seem to be doing as of late. The musicianship featured is quite good and consistent. One surprise on BURNED AGAIN was the ska-like "Your Voice", on which White really comes across with sweet, soft vocals that left me quite impressed. In all, a good effort by a band that deserves some attention. -Matt Edmund



STITCH HOPELESS AND THE SEA LEGS
STUFFING COFFINS SINCE 1977
HAIRBALL 8

What do you get when you mix the ramblings of Shane MacGowen and The Pogues with the seaworthy rants of Popeye the Sailor Man? Why, Stitch Hopeless and the Sea Legs, of course. STUFFING COFFINS SINCE 1977, is a CD packed with dirty, stinky, original (with the exceptions of "These Two Boots of Mine" (Bruisers) and "Blood Stains" (Agent Orange) rockabilly. In some cases (such as with "Trash Like Me"), the group plays with a Ramones feel; but for the most part, this is modern rockabilly, best exemplified by "Bleed on Me". "To Hell with You" is a rarity, in that its lead vocal is smooth, not gravelly. "Needles in Your Eye" also stands out for its group-chant vocal; whereas "Down by the River" quiets down this otherwise noisy work. -Dan MacIntosh



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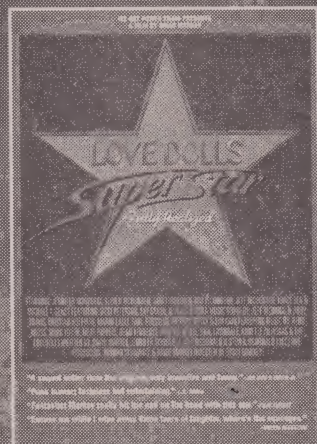
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STOCKYARD STOICS JUMP START RECORDS

This Brooklyn group boasts ex-members of Leftover Crack, F-Minus, and MDC, which pretty much means that you're about to hear some fucking good punk rock. Forging a living from keeping the original spirit of the movement intact, Stockyard Stoics recall the glory days of Stiff Little Fingers and The Clash (as well as Operation Ivy and Rancid's early years). The vocals are as raw as Brendan Kelly's, and the music is straightforward and memorable. Not a classic, but a solid record with only the best intentions. Close to the roots and intertwining the anger with plenty of critiques on the current political and social climates facing us all. If you want something to shout along with, this is it. -David Barker



SWIMMERS WE SWAM AS FOR BEHAVIOR OUR BEHAVIOR LOUISIANA PURCHASE

Left-of-center rockers Swimmers have released a five-song sampler highlighting the outfit's penchant for creating noise-laden punk-rock nuggets. "Hot Pocket" sounds like the end result of a collaboration between System of a Down and Talking Heads, while "Domicile, Where I Live" provides a tense surf-rock vibe under spastic vocals. Jagged, dissonant, and very bouncy in a thrift-store T-shirt kind of way, this disc smartly combines the exaltations of a carnival with the omens of a rock 'n' roll show firmly in tow, making palatable rock music for the ADD crowd. www.swimmerspdx.com -Mike SOS



TESTAMENT LIVE IN LONDON SPITFIRE RECORDS

The release of this DVD and CD of Testament's classic lineup (featuring Chuck Billy, Peterson, Skolnick, and Greg Christian) is an older sort of metal, but the sound quality is top-notch. You can see and hear London reacting to these characters in a very positive way. In other words, they are rocking out from start to finish, stopping only to swill cheap beer and punch their neighbor. This music is not in any way outdated-the band members are getting there, though. This is a thorough introduction to a band that metal enthusiasts who take pride in its history should know about. -Thomas Murray



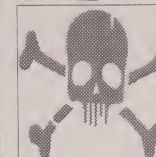
THE ALTARBOYS GREATEST HITS VOLUME 2 LAST CHANCE RECORDS

The debut album by The Altarboys is the perfect example of everything that is wrong with today's punk/hardcore scene. The band has a cool name, a clever catchphrase ("169 Years of Punk Rock"), and a slick look which it must have taken a long time thinking up-which definitely cut into the act's practice time. The songs are loud, fast, obnoxious, and brainless, the kind of punk that makes you want to throw on your old Clash, Bad Religion, and Social Distortion records to remind yourself that some good comes out of punk rock. Just because you can play three chords, cuss continuously, and drink a lot doesn't make you punk; being different does. This Portland act is anything but different-or good, for that matter. -Jeff Strack



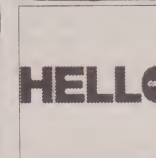
THE BOMB INDECISION THICK RECORDS

The Bomb is the bomb. Chicago punk scene veteran Jeff Pezzatti is a singer with balls and regular-fellah qualities that endear him to you. He sounds like a best buddy who just happens to be a really good, rocking singer. INDECISION was produced by Jawbox's/Against Me's J. Robbins, and the punk pro's vibe is all over this disc. The Bomb reminds me of a revved-down and polished All; but the shine doesn't mean that there is no edge. The Bomb is ready to explode and spread the joy of rock 'n' roll. Chalk one up for the upper-classmen. -H. Barry Zimmerman



THE BOSCH BUY ONE GET ONE SELF-RELEASED

The Bosch has an energetic, straightforward, art-punk feel (in the vein of early Devo), with simple guitar riffs, surf-punk drumming, and driving bass. However, that is where the similarities end. No instrument has its own voice, so you essentially if you buy one, you get one shitty CD. After hearing the entire album twice over, I don't recall the guitar, the bass, the drums, or vocals having any shining moments. The vocals are annoying and uncreative in their unsuccessful attempt at melding punk angst and new-wave humor. I hear Violent Femmes, I hear They Might Be Giants...but where the hell are The Bosch? Maybe you can find them at www.boschcast.com. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.

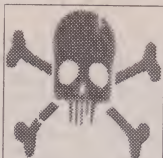


THE CAPE HELLO HARD SOUL RECORDS

Lately, awkward garage rock groups (each wielding those requisite worn-out Telecasters) have been plucked from their scruffy practice spaces and stuffed by the bushel into the mainstream's salivating mouth. The Capes and their catchy, clunky assortment of rock songs deserve such drool. Jagged strokes of (sometimes jarring) guitar, simple but bloody danceable drumbeats, an analog organ's array of smart howls and squeals and humble squeaks are all carefully combined on songs like "Tightly Wound" and "Carly"; whereas "Comet Tails" finds that balance between the lo-fi lethargy of The Strokes and a love-lamenting surf ballad by The Beach Boys. HELLO's mix of sweet and deliciously dissonant sections will likely make mouths water. Let's hope the mainstream doesn't chew them up and spit them out. It's known for doing that, you know. -Dane!



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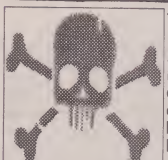
**THE CITY ON FILM
AMERICAN DIARY
REDDER RECORDS**

This is one more a pop-punk/emo grandfather who has suddenly decided to try and prove to us all that he can cover a more PERSONAL, less aggressive style of music but instead ends up with the same formula of cheesy lyrics, repetitive use of instruments, and an unmemorable collection of material better left for a home recording of unfinished works. The lead instrument, the acoustic guitar, does nothing to warrant the title of lead-and with its failure the vocals are left to fend for the entire project. Unfortunately, the vocals are one of the weakest points, with their monotonous delivery and forgettable lyrics. Therefore, this was a failed project from the get-go. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



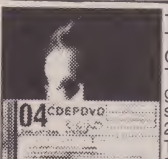
**THE CLASSIC STRUGGLE
FEEL LIKE HELL
METAL BLADE**

It'd be hard to classify The Classic Struggle as run of the mill, only because this South Carolina beast play their brand metalcore with the utmost precision. But at times, this 12-track disc sounds a bit too sterile. It could be the robotic drum triggers or the standard serpentine vocal delivery that countless bands employ, but there's not a lot of unique identity here. What lies beneath, however, is a simmering showcase of molten metal, such as the face-breaking "Amen to Artillery" and the thrashy "Unsacred". This quintet has undoubtedly studied its metalcore and has, in turn, unleashed a potent yet a bit tattered album that mosh-pit mavens can get their rocks off to. www.metalblade.com -Mike SOS



**THE DEACONS
BROOKLYN TOWNE
MADE IN BROOKLYN**

Hardened punk rockers The Deacons boil over with passion and conviction on the quartet's 12-track old-school offering. This outfit, born and bred in Brooklyn, makes a firm point that the borough offers much more than trendy Williamsburg, as songs like the blue-collar stomp of "Don't Need a Reason" or the rejuvenating "29" display some mighty fine street punk. Keeping it simple, energetic, and interesting, songs like "I Feel Fine" and "Of My Father" provide the kind of insightful expositions behind crashing power chords that your new-fangled punk band couldn't muster even after repeated listening of Social Distortion. The Deacons would fit best in-between your Dropkick Murphys and The Casualties. www.brooklyntowne.com -Mike SOS



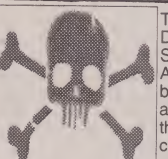
**THE FELIX CULPA
THOUGHT CONTROL
COMMON CLOUD RECORDS**

The Felix Culpa are a rock band, plain and simple. Sure, they've got influences from tons of places; but in the end, no particular scene is home to these three Wisconsin boys. Following up 2004's COMMITMENT, the four songs from THOUGHTCONTROL are a testament to modern rock music. Pulling the same heartstrings that a lot of the Tooth & Nail bands have a handle on, shifting the vocal styles in a fashion that's not clichéd, and with a musical demeanor similar to that of The Ghost, these kids have churned out an impressive EP. Plus, you get a bonus DVD with live material, interviews, and all that fun stuff. Good deal. -David Barker



**THE GIRAFFES
SELF-TITLED
RAZOR & TIE DIRECT LLC**

The debut major-label release from this hard-rocking Brooklyn quartet is an explosion of arena-rock energy the likes of which we rarely hear. With the sound and polish of old-school rockers like Deep Purple and Thin Lizzy, The Giraffes reach right through the speakers and splash any preconceptions about rock 'n' roll against the wall. It's amazing this album ever got released, as charismatic 28-year-old lead singer Aaron Lazar recently legally died twice from a congenital heart defect. Thank modern science that it brought him back so that he could bring us this amazing music. This album kicks ass in so many ways that it's hard to count them. I guess one of the ways is one of the few soccer-riot anthems ever, "Man U". Fuck Manchester United. -Dug



**THE INOCULATORS
DROPPED THEIR BRAINS
SELF-RELEASED**

A funny thing happened while I was listening to the debut album by Los Angeles punk-rock act The Inoculators: my iPod froze and hasn't worked since. I thought that it might be a coincidence that it broke during this particular CD, but after further thought, I came to the theory that my little mp3 player is just sick of the same old shit. It's not that this album is a complete disaster: the band occasionally throw in a decent song that sounds like old Suicide Machines or Op Ivy; but this isn't enough to recommend it. Originality seems to be lost on most new bands-and like my iPod, I just can't take it anymore. -Jeff Slack



**THE MISTERIOSOS
SELF-TITLED
TRIPTONE RECORDS**

The debut full-length release from this New York-baked [sic] psychedelic trio is enough to give one flashbacks. With fuzzed-out guitar, organ, and drums, the tunes here are a reincarnation of the late '60s and a good introduction to Andy Warhol and LSD. The band's biggest influences are The Electric Prunes and The Brian Jonestown Massacre, so it makes sense that the music is three steps back and one leap way into the future. Tula Storm's breathy vocals on "Any Wonder" are a real treat. Though it is a tad jarring when the band drops into a pulsating, Indian-style jam right in the middle of a very catchy melody, anything else wouldn't work with the black lights. This is a pleasant romp down a colorful road not many bands are traveling on. -Dug



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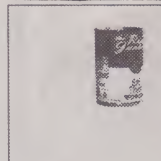
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THE PANIC DIVISION VERSUS THE MILITIA GROUP

Ambiguous lyrics about lost love, plucky riffs that strain above bright power chords, and an abundance of build-ups and breakdowns serve as evidence that VERSUS, The Panic Division's debut, should be shelved with the others in catchall categories like "melodic hardcore" or "post punk." But there's something more powerful, more profound about these atmospheric tracks. On songs such as "Automatic Synthetic" and "Paradise", singer Colton Holliday's desperate pleas swim in an ocean of synths and samples, pitch and roll with wave after wild wave of droning chords, drown in endless echoes of drums and grunting guitars. Perhaps Colton and company have merely amended an already tired post-punk style by adding ambient blankets of echo and delay and distortion. Isn't originality, though, only the subtle improvement of something tired and trite? -Dane!



THE REMOTE JUNKIES EAT THEIR WORDS MUNKACOOPER

Filled primarily with speedy, poppy melodic punk, The Remote Junkies' latest album certainly isn't bringing anything new or original to the table, with many songs recalling work by bands like the now-defunct (?) blink-182 (come to think of it, the vocals sound akin to a mix of Mark Hoppus and Tom DeLonge). They've an overly syrupy number ("It All Seems Wrong"), the token anti-Bush song ("The Red State Blues"-which ain't that bad), etc. But there are some brighter spots-namely, the darker, NOFX-esque "Analgeist"; the fast, heavy, more-hardcore blast "Stuck"; and another hardcore-informed tune, "The Stink" (which, even though it kinda seems all over the place, the sick intro and forceful mid-tempo verses alone are better than the album's mostly trite, "safe" sound). -Janelle Jones



THE TALK THE SINNERS OF DAUGHTERS MORISEN RECORDS

The Talk have added a member since the release of THE SINNERS OF DAUGHTERS, but they functioned pretty well as a trio. The Charlotte-based group wields a heavy 1960s influence, with The Beatles-meet-The Apples in Stereo vocals and sunshine pop choruses. Tracks like "These Swollen Eyes" and "The Search" swerve into a punkier direction (which might interrupt the album's flow for some). Apparently, the band's music has landed a spot in the sitcom WILDFIRE. (I can't claim to have seen it, but good for them.) Good band, solid release. It's good to know that something besides crappy metal-core is going on in Charlotte. -David Barker



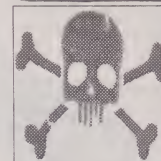
THE THIEVES TALES FROM THE WHITE LINE LIQUOR AND POKER MUSIC

Oxford, England's The Thieves guitarists Hal and Sam Stokes and drummer Jamie Dawson have produced a fantastic rock disc. The Oxford scene has given the world Radiohead, Supergrass, and The Eggs, and The Thieves should be next to knock the Earth for a loop. TALES FROM THE WHITE LINE is a rock 'n' roll disc that doesn't swim in its influences. This is a modern disc. Some of the standout tunes on this Liquor and Poker Music debut include "Gimme Some Lip", "Don't You Lose Me", and the beautiful "My Old Mind". The Thieves' TALES FROM THE WHITE LINE should find a home with all fans of artful rock. Bravo. -H. Barry Zimmerman



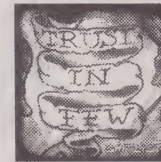
THE TRANSFER ROMANTICS & ADDICTS CONQUER THE WORLD RECORDS

What this band lacks in originality, they make up for by being really, really catchy. Take THROUGH BEING COOL-era Saves the Day and make it more technical and aggressive. Or, think about the recent crop of poppy punk bands that have been breaking through on MTV and up the talent a bit. Trendy music, but they're still a tight unit, and the members are more than qualified on each instrument. If you dig the idea of Acceptance or Anberlin getting heavier, then you might be into this. Definitely Victory Records or The Militia Group material. (Take that as you will.) -David Barker



THE TOSSERS THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH VICTORY RECORDS

Simply put, this is good stuff. It is a pleasure to review good music-even when good album are few and far between. Though it may appear that The Tossers are riding the coattails of other successful Irish punk bands, this group are veterans of the craft, with 12 years of experience and four albums. At times, THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH can be slow, with methodic Irish ballads, but it just demonstrates that this group is dedicated to their heritage and punk rock. This is best exemplified by the recurring theme of alcohol. Go purchase this record and enjoy it while drinking a frosty pint of Guinness. -Luke



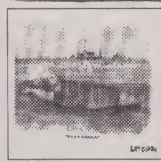
TRUST IN FEW SHITLIST SPOOK CITY RECORDS

Subtle they are not. Just in time for your next breakup mix is "You're a Piece of Shit". With a chorus like "You're a fucking piece of shit," there is no room for analyzing what unreturned phone calls really mean. Trust in Few has the angry old-school punk swagger down. For some reason, they choose to close out with the folk-punk ballad "My Barroom and My Beer", but the rest of the tracks are swift, punchy, and direct. So go ahead and grab a beer and sing along. Just read the track title and you'll know the words. -Erika Owens



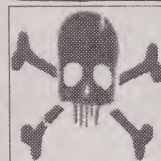
TWENTY FOUR HOURS TO LIVE WE'RE LOUDMOUTHS SURPRISE ATTACK

Miami hardcore troupe Twenty Four Hours to Live take much influence from the NYHC scene (namely, Madball, Sworn Enemy, and Cro-Mags). On the quintet's eight-track endeavor, a high-pitched yowl leads the menacing assault packed with breakdowns and an occasional guitar lick thrown in between the chunky guitar riffs and bass rattlings on tracks like "We're Bringin' It Down" and "Dragnet" (whose ending is the best part on the disc). There's nothing earth-shattering or incendiary here, folks, just five guys letting loose and churning out some heartfelt hardcore with a metallic coating. www.surpriseattackrecords.com -Mike SOS



UNA CORDA PROPER POSITION FOR FLOATING [1881] WE USED TO BE THE FUTURE

Epic, guitar-driven, darkly melodic instrumentals are the main force behind this four-song EP by a band out of Birmingham, England. Their hometown plays an important role by also being the origin of the fathers (arguably) of the original doom-inspired rock, Black Sabbath. This is obvious in the emphasis on strong guitar licks that go from sugar sweet to bitter anger in seconds. Their song structures are built around intense and sometimes dynamic metal-influenced explosions powered by ferocious drumming (not far from that of Sabbath's Bill Ward). This EP is admirable for showcasing their technical abilities through long, drawn-out instrumentals. However, Una Corda still lack a consistent originality to shine through the rest of the current wave of instrumental rockers. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



VARIOUS ARTISTS TASTE OF CHRISTMAS WARCON ENTERPRISES

Okay, so it's a little late-but it's never too early to stock up on good cheer and festive music for next Christmas! The Taste of Chaos tour has now spawned the TASTE OF CHRISTMAS comp. If you like Christmas music and those Chaotic bands, this is well worth it. Covers are intermixed with holiday-related originals. "Happy Christmas (War Is Over)" is a pretty faithful rendition of John Lennon's original, whereas Skindred morph "Jingle Bells" into "Jungle Bells". This combo of covers, originals, and different styles creates a festive but rocking Christmas soundtrack. -Erika Owens



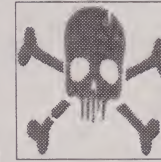
VATOS LOCOS FORTUNE AND FUN LOADED BOMB RECORDS

The hardest-rocking low riders in North America and the band hailed as "the most dangerous band in Houston" hits it out of the barrio with their latest release. Blistering rock 'n' roll with touches of rockabilly and hardcore punk carry this album along with the intensity of a prison riot. The band looks as dangerous as they sound: all brown bandannas and tats. The old-school tribute on the liner sleeve of this disc is one of the best pieces of album art I've seen in long time. But ultimately, no matter how hard-ass a band looks, it's the music that sells the disc-and the tight, angry rock that makes up this disc is the fucking shit. Somewhere, Mike Ness is jealous. -Dug



VENA AMORI RICHARD ALLEN DALTON REV DISTRIBUTION

Vena Amori is in line at the screaming metal vomit stand. Nothing original, just bad interpretation. The lead singer sounds like he is sick and crawled out of bed rather than a demon from sweet rock Hell. The players are trying. The music is tight, and sometimes they find a cool groove and pull off an odd time signature; but for the most part the vocals are so so so uncool and amateurish that the is damaged. RICHARD ALLEN DAWSON is a waste of time. -H. Barry Zimmerman



WHITE NOISE ENSEMBLE J'AI VU LE LONG DES ROUTES DESOLEES DES CARCASSES DE CHAMEAUX BLANCHIR SELF-RELEASED

Fans of instrumental mood giants Godspeed! You Black Emperor and swirling atmosphere-makers Mogwai should automatically find their place within the lush textures created by White Noise Ensemble of Montreal, Canada. The guitar work is conveyed entirely in dark melodies that play alongside strong, driving bass lines and powerful drumming. These more organic instruments are at times successfully interwoven with electronics, which are used to create deep layers and variety within these instrumental tracks. The genius is apparent through the excellent transition between dark, electro moments to warm banjo explosions (e.g., "3,1416"). The band consists of three musicians and a visual artist (Veronique Beland) who offers inspiration and live visual assistance. The entire project was DIY all the way down to the beautiful handmade CD art. -Norberto Gomez, Jr.



WILL TO LIVE TESTED AND TRUE SPOOK CITY RECORDS

Shallow political consciousness and hardcore, who would have thought? Right away, Will to Live state their case: "Pointless dilemma, pointless debate / Humanity's pointless chase / To impose absolute views / In a world of subjective views." But we gotta keep trying. So Will to Live take the pit as their pulpit and present their take on cultural anthropology and the social psyche. Just as their lyrical content is a step out of high school self-absorption, their sound, though typical, shows maturity with its focus and tight adherence to hardcore convention. Will to Live know their audience's musical and cultural tastes well and gives them just what they want. -Erika Owens

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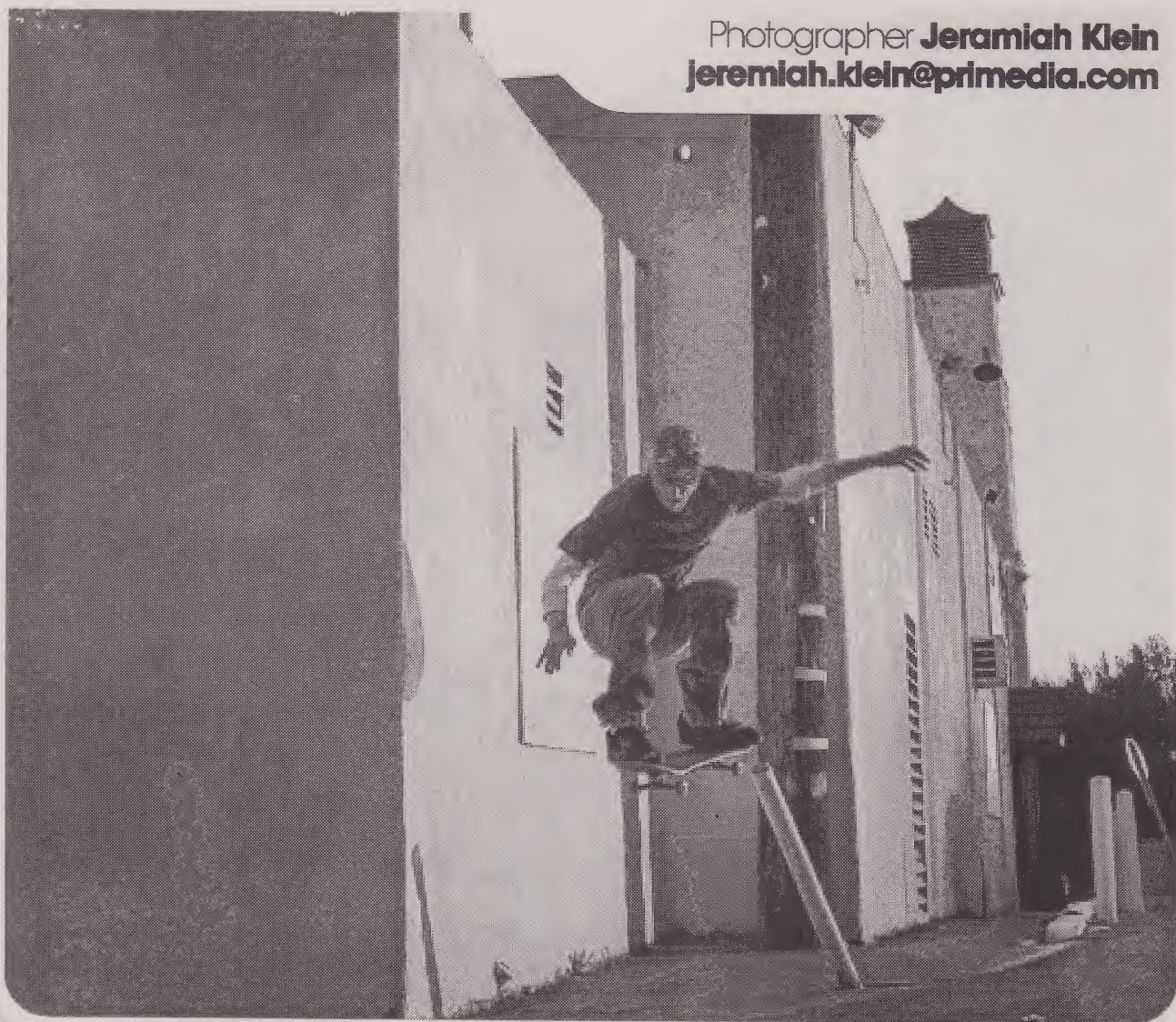
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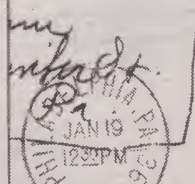
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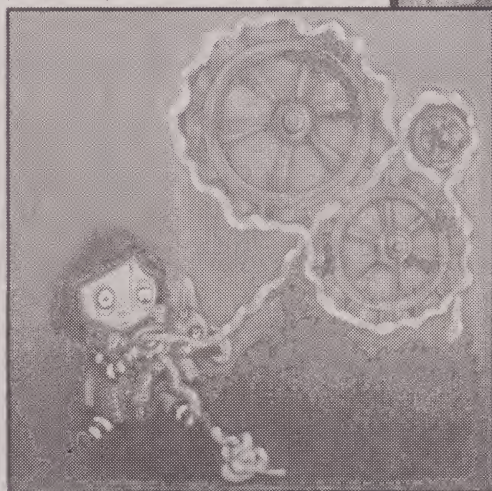
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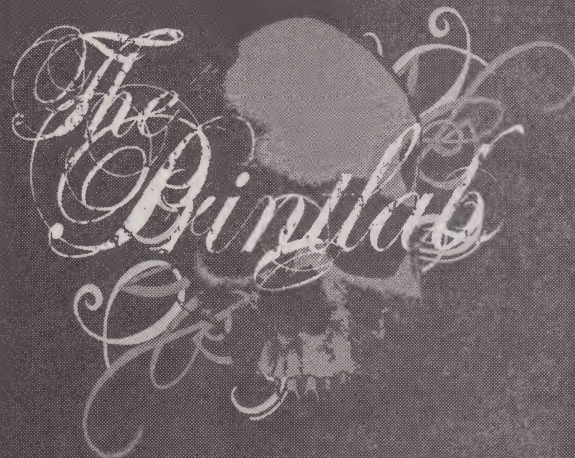
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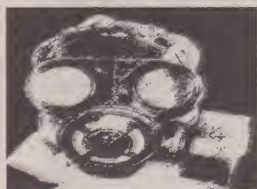
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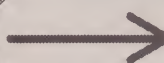
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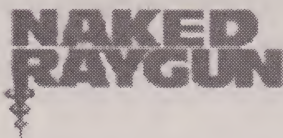
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